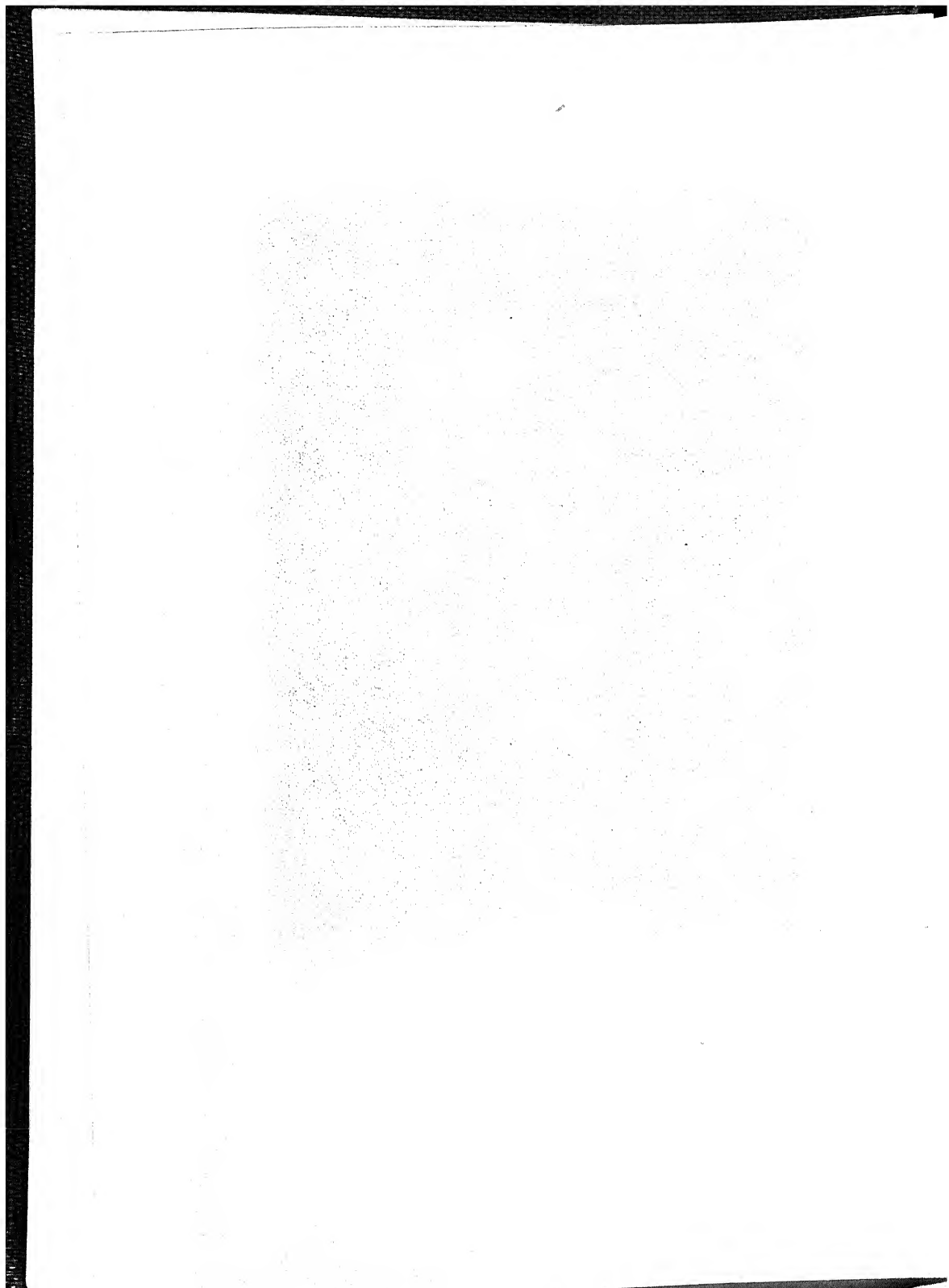


Faithfully Yrs.

J. Card. Gibbons .





LIFE OF JAMES CARDINAL GIBBONS

By ALLEN S. WILL, A. M., Litt. D.

"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."—Matthew, xxii, 21.



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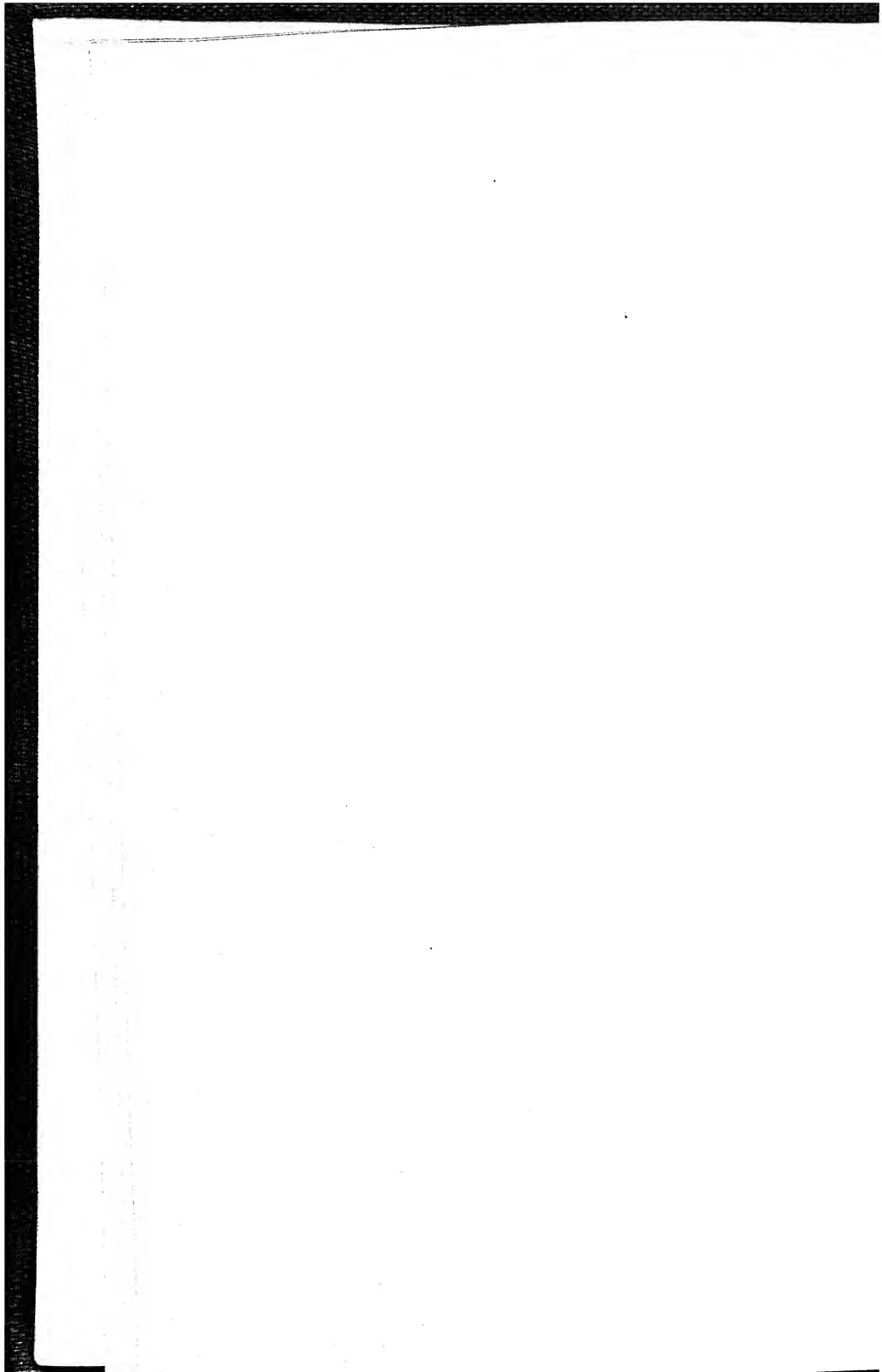
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TO THE INSPIRER OF
MY LABORS
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.



P R E F A C E

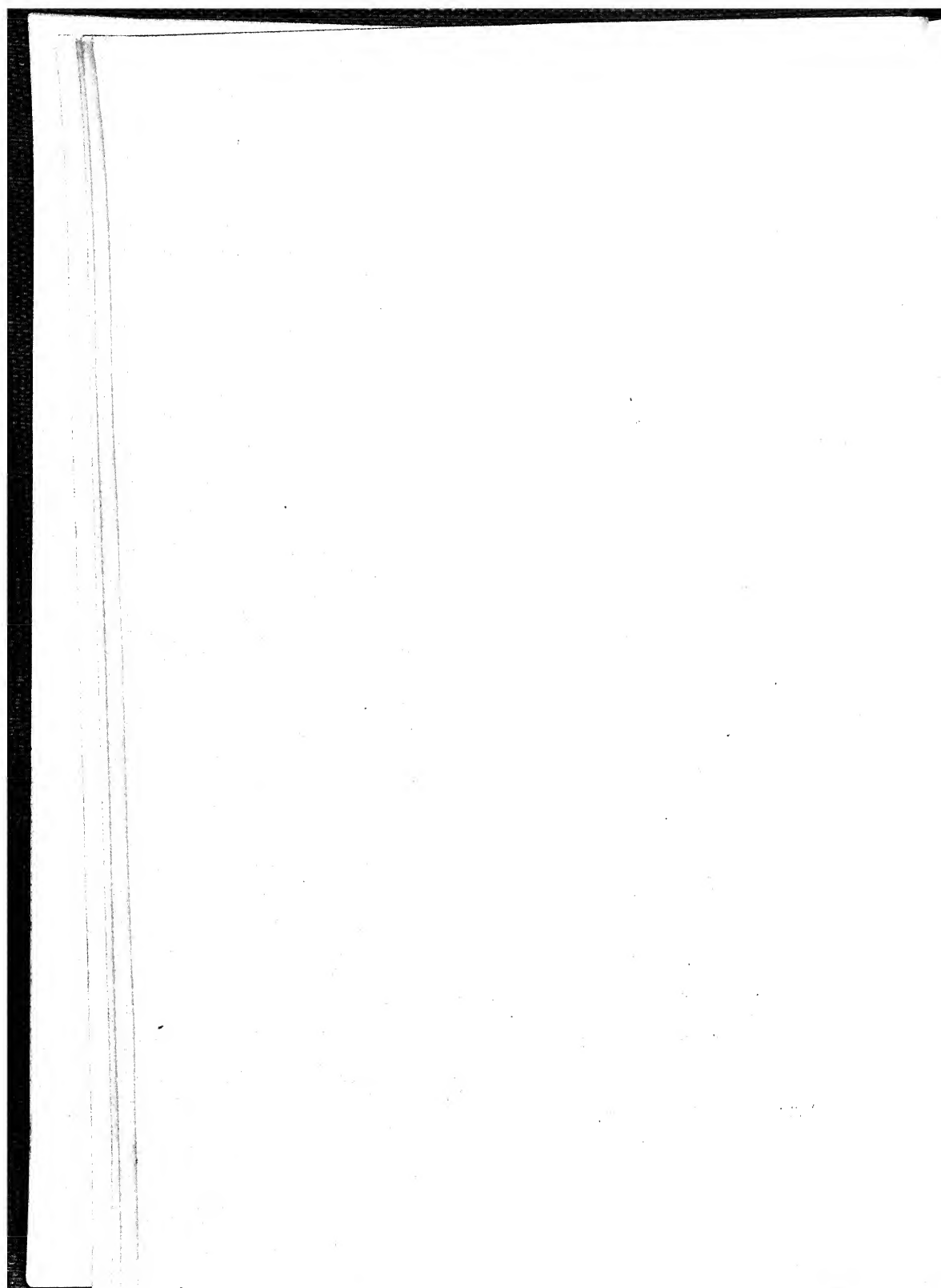
Few men who exert great influence are able to see in their own times the fruition of their most cherished undertakings; but such has been the privilege bestowed by a benign Providence on Cardinal Gibbons. It seems not inappropriate, therefore, to pause on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary as priest and his twenty-fifth anniversary as Cardinal and survey, when he is 77 years old, the broad outlines of his career. Not only is it true that the principal labors to which he has hitherto devoted himself have been concluded, but some of them, indeed, were finished so long ago that their details have been almost forgotten by a generation intent chiefly on the things of the present.

No comprehensive attempt has been made up to this time to tell the story of the Cardinal's life, crowded, as it has been, with events not only of deep significance to the world, but of absorbing interest. True, there is much in print, but it is fragmentary, tinged with the impressions of a moment, controversial or wholly lacking in the perspective with which his career may now be fairly viewed. These considerations, and the peculiar appropriateness of the double jubilee, have emboldened me to embark on the rather hazardous task of trying to write a biography while the subject of it is yet living. At the beginning I resolved that if any compromise with the standards which should govern an impartial biography were encountered, I would not proceed with the work; and I have fully satisfied myself, at least, that this obstacle did not arise.

In the preparation of this book, I have been especially solicitous to obtain accuracy. Unverified statements have been rejected, and I have wholly discarded unconfirmed tradition and reminiscence. The opinions expressed, except where they are attributed to others, are mine.

ALLEN S. WILL.

BALTIMORE, *July 30, 1911.*



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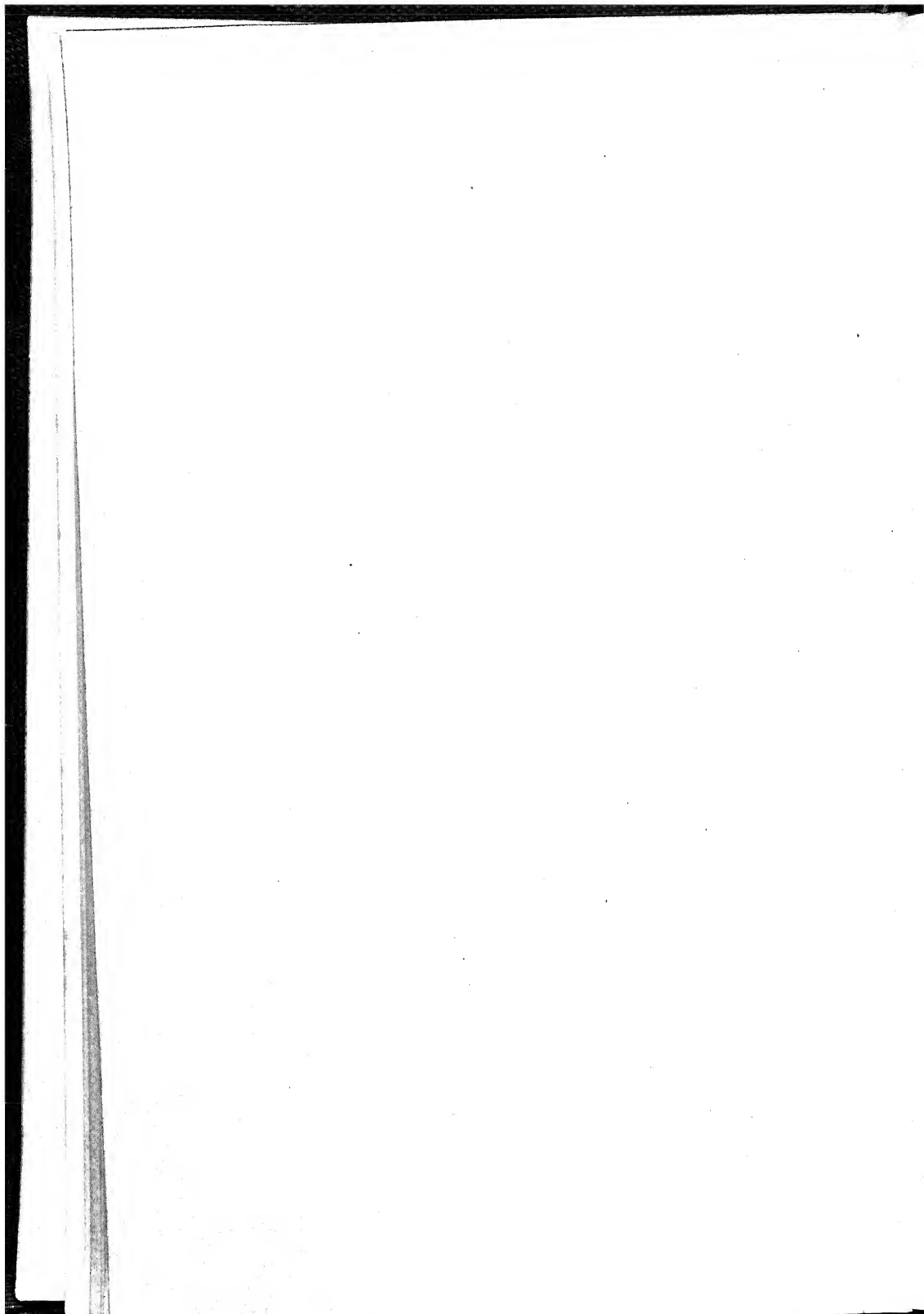
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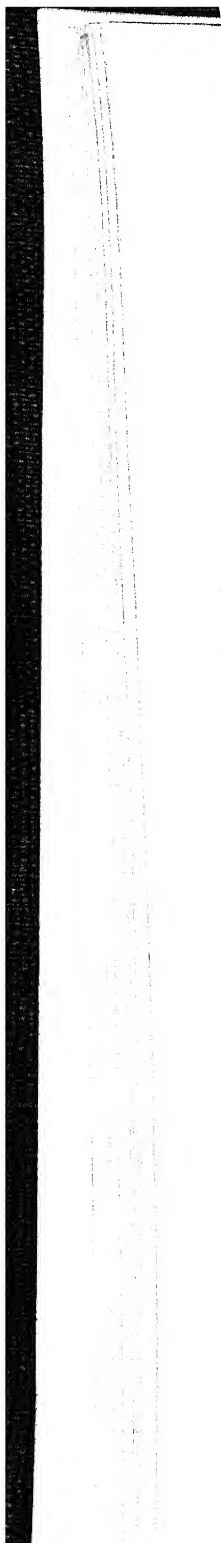
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LIFE OF CARDINAL GIBBONS

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AND STUDIES.

Although the active life of Cardinal Gibbons has stretched well into the twentieth century, the twilight of the eighteenth still seemed to linger around his early home when he was born in Baltimore, July 23, 1834. The city of which he was to become the foremost citizen, identified with it throughout a long career, was then overgrown from the straggling outlines of a colonial town. On the east the peaked roofs and tall, thin chimneys of its residential streets extended barely to Fell's Point, a full mile inside of where the Lazaretto Light, now half hidden by the smoke of clamorous factories, blinked at the smart clipper ships which raced up the Patapsco with the trade of the world. To the westward the swinging sign of the General Wayne Inn, on Paca street, bearing a portrait of "Mad Anthony" in brilliant blue and buff, marked the dividing line between urban life and a peaceful vista of rural estates, soon to be devoured by the hungry giant whose spreading bulk was already beginning to crowd them.

Uptown one might see, in the stately parade of late Georgian fashion which passed on bright afternoons, the women who were giving the city a repute as the home of the loveliest of their sex in America; and here and there might be observed the raven hair and olive cheeks of the daughters of rich Santo Domingan planters, driven in a swarm by the revolution of L'Ouverture to find in Baltimore the home of exiles. Downtown, around the waterfront, the heart of the city throbbed. Grave merchants in sober dress, their throats wrapped in stiff

black stocks, sat in counting-rooms fronting on narrow streets and traded ambitiously with Europe, South America and the Indies. Privateers, which twenty years before had scattered British commerce in a hundred ports, now anchored around the wharves to load the products of the West and South in peaceful commerce. Swift schooners, manned not infrequently by sailors who had proved that they could use a cutlass as well as trim a sail, were freighting the rich crops of the Chesapeake region to the metropolis of Maryland. Planters and merchants from half a dozen States drank the old wines of the Fountain Inn, or Barnum's, crowding to the gay and busy city to buy their supplies a year ahead.*

The name of Johns Hopkins might be seen on the sign of a wholesale grocery store on Lombard street, near Light street.† A few hundred yards distant, on German street, near Charles, was the dry-goods establishment of George Peabody. The alert young man who opened Mr. Peabody's store in the morning and wrote his laconic business letters was William Pinkney Whyte. On Charles street, near German, was the modest office of Enoch Pratt, iron merchant. Chief Justice Taney's handsome residence was on Lexington street, the second house from St. Paul street. The courts of law felt the inspiration of William Pinkney, Luther Martin, William Wirt and Reverdy Johnson. Edgar Allan Poe, recently dismissed from West Point, was walking the streets seeking employment as a writer or teacher. At the Adelphi Theatre Junius Brutus Booth, then in the noonday of his genius, was playing nightly. Two years before, a tottering old man had been an object of respectful interest as he used to enter his residence at Front and Lombard streets after attending mass. He was Charles Carroll, and the hand that turned the heavy brass door knob had signed the immortal Declaration.

* Scharf, *Chronicles of Baltimore*, pp. 405-408.

† Mr. Henry C. Wagner, antiquarian, of Baltimore, is authority for the locations of old buildings as given here.

The stately Cathedral, then lately erected on a bold hill in the newer part of the city, was the seat of Catholic influence in America. It had been the pride of John Carroll, first American archbishop, who had died before it was opened for worship; but he had lived to see the organization of the Church planted on a foundation that would stand the shock of the "Knownothing" times, soon to come, and prove firm and lasting in the marvelous career of development that was opening before the new republic. Carroll had been succeeded by Neale, and then Marechal and Whitfield; and in the year of the future Cardinal's birth, Eccleston was elevated to the episcopal chair, and sat beneath the canopy at mass. Besides the Cathedral, the churches of St. Peter, St. John, St. Patrick, St. Mary and St. James had been erected; and the aggressive spirit of the clergy was fast winning converts. The Catholic population of Maryland was estimated at 75,000 out of 500,000, a greater proportion than in any other American State.*

The house in which the Cardinal was born survived the changes of time until 1892, when it was torn down to make way for the widening of Lexington street into a plaza for public parades and outdoor meetings. It stood on the west side of Gay street, a short distance north of Fayette street, and was a substantial home of two stories, capped by a high-pitched roof, the type of many others to be seen in Baltimore in the first half of the nineteenth century. That part of the city, since given over almost wholly to trade, was then near the core of the residential district. In front of the Gibbons home streamed a picturesque tide of life—fashionable idlers, who maintained many of the traditions of the English aristocracy; folk of many sorts coming in from the northeastern outskirts of the town to the maze of rope and mast that covered the inner harbor; coaches of the rich, with liveried servants on the boxes; white-arched Conestoga wagons, rumbling in from

* Letter of Archbishop Eccleston to the Congregation of the Propaganda, quoted by Shea, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, Vol. 3, p. 447.

He was a man of great energy and ability, and his services to the country were many. He was a member of the Senate for many years, and his influence was great. He was a man of great energy and ability, and his services to the country were many. He was a member of the Senate for many years, and his influence was great.

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James was the eldest son. He was born in 1795, and he died in 1850. He was a man of great energy and ability, and his services to the country were many. He was a member of the Senate for many years, and his influence was great.

Thomas C. Calhoun became a member of the Senate. He was a man of great energy and ability, and his services to the country were many. He was a member of the Senate for many years, and his influence was great. He was a man of great energy and ability, and his services to the country were many.

well in America, his health failed, and his physician advised a long trip. He took his family back to Ireland in 1837, when James was three years old, and there he decided to remain, buying land near Westport and settling down again to the life of a farmer.

The future Cardinal's education was begun at the age of seven years, when he was sent to a private classical school at Ballinrobe, near Westport, taught at first by a Mr. Jennings, and later by John J. Rooney. He was a slender lad, with clear blue eyes and brown hair, and, though his health was not the strongest, his ardent love of outdoor life helped to develop a vitality which in future years enabled him to sustain the greatest fatigues of mind and body. An eager intellect and the power of intense application made him an apt pupil. When the elements had been mastered, he began with avidity the study of history, languages and mathematics, unraveling, by the laborious methods of Irish schools in those days, the polished sentences of Virgil, Ovid, Cicero and Livy, and delving hard into Xenophon and Homer. The English classics particularly fascinated him. Addison, Goldsmith, Johnson and Moore were his favorites, and to his pronounced fondness for the study of such models was due, in large measure, that limpid clearness of expression which became a striking characteristic of his literary style in later years. A remarkable memory enabled him to quote off-hand many poems he had read. He received much help from his maternal grandfather, James Walsh, for whom he had been named—a scholarly man who taught him the principles of mathematics.

Among those strenuous Irish lads, bubbling with vitality, sports were rough when the stern discipline of long school hours was lifted. They wrestled and boxed, ran and jumped, played cricket, football, handball and prisoner's base, which later developed into the American game of baseball. Young Gibbons, though not so sturdy of frame as some of his companions, loved the rigor of their contests as much as any. He

played as hard as he studied, and a mark which he carried on one of his fingers through life was left by an injury received in a game of cricket.

Among the fifty boys at the school were not a few who rose to distinction. One of them, Thomas Tighe, became a member of Parliament, and held other important offices. His two brothers, Robert and James Tighe, adopted the career of officers in the English army, as did another schoolmate of the Cardinal, General Sillery. The future Bishop MacCormack, of Galway, was also a pupil at Ballinrobe. Thomas Tighe lived to a ripe old age. He used to recall James as an amiable lad, very studious and talented, and a marked favorite in the school.*

James was confirmed by Archbishop McHale at such an early age that he was rejected on account of his youth when he sought the privilege in company with other children; but, mingling in the stream of the favored ones, he received the rite notwithstanding this obstacle, and was praised for his precocity. The deep piety of his mother exerted a marked influence on him in the impressionable period of his early life.

The Gibbons family might have remained in Ireland and the Cardinal's lot might not have been cast in his native country, had not the death of his father in 1847, when the lad was 13 years old, changed the whole outlook. The energetic mother, thus suddenly left with the responsibility of a young family, decided to return to America with her children, and they embarked on a sailing ship at Liverpool for New Orleans. It was a long trip, destined to be marked by shipwreck and a providential escape for all on board. They sailed from Liverpool in January, 1853, and it was the middle of March before the islands skirting the American coast were sighted. Near midnight on March 17, in calm weather, the vessel went fast aground on a sand bar close to the Island of Great Bahama, and, had the wind proved treacherous, none might have escaped

* Extract from a letter written by Thomas Tighe, May 27, 1909.

the sea. But fate was favorable, and, after waiting in great anxiety for the dawn, they were transferred in small boats to the island, whence they were carried to Nassau and kindly treated until they could continue their journey.

Arriving in New Orleans, James obtained employment as clerk in a grocery store on Camp street, kept by William C. Raymond. It was one of the business establishments characteristic of New Orleans in those days, supplying the needs of Mississippi river steamers and plantations, as well as families of the city. Little did the rough river men, or the elegant country gentlemen who came in from their broad acres of cotton or sugar to buy for themselves and their slaves, think that the obliging youth who waited on them would some day rise to eminence attained by few Americans.

Young Gibbons' intelligence, industry and fidelity attracted the notice of Mr. Raymond, and he was soon offered promotion. He was seriously thinking at this time of the choice of a career; and a mission held at St. Joseph's Church in the spring of 1854 served to fix his aspirations in the channel from which they were never to swerve. This mission was conducted by three remarkable young Redemptorist priests from New York—Revs. Isaac Thomas Hecker, Clarence Walworth and Augustine Hewit. All were converts from Protestantism. Idealists by nature and gifted with brilliant talents, they had run the gamut of religious aspiration and had at last taken refuge within the fold of the Catholic Church as the haven where the eager inquiries of their restless natures might find satisfaction. Of the three, Hecker was easily the leader.* In earlier years he had been a member of the socialistic community at Brook Farm and a companion of Ralph Waldo Emerson and George William Curtis. A venture in business life had failed to satisfy him. Converted to the Catholic faith in 1844, he had been ordained a priest but five years before he began his mission in New Orleans. His magnetic preaching kindled a fire within

* Elliott, Life of Father Hecker.

the soul of young Gibbons, who joined in the new fervor and spirit. The priesthood by which determination he was also greatly influenced, Father Dufoe, a Jesuit, and by Father demptorist.

Four years after this mission closed, Hewit, with two companions, obtained the right to found the Congregation of Missionary Priests, in which they realized their zealous hope of continuing to preaching for the conversion of Protestants the work of the "Paulist Fathers" since that time a monument; but not the least of the fruits of his labors for the development of the Church in the accession of the young New Orleans clerk to the ranks of the ambassadors of Christ."*

Mr. Raymond was loath to see his youthful son enter a business career, in which the prospects were not so bright. A warm friendship had sprung up between them which was to end only with the death of Raymond afterward. Mrs. Gibbons, too, was reluctant to see her eldest son, on whom she had grown to rely, enter a business career. Her talents and character ripened with years, and her widowed mother hoped to find the prop of her old age. Her decision remained fixed, and at last all acquiescence. He was resolved to take.

In the summer of 1855, when he was twenty, he started for Baltimore, having decided to make that city and state the scene of the labors upon which he had entered. His mother, his eldest sister, Mary, his brother, John, who had already begun to accumulate riches in the grain trade, remained in New York. His father, Catherine having died in Ireland at the age of thirty, the family was beset with delays and difficulties in the

* Hewit had been a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He was a son of Reuben H. Walworth, a distinguished Chancellor of New York.



the conveniences of the railroad had been generally extended. He went by steamer up the Mississippi and the Ohio to Cincinnati, and thence by rail most of the way to Baltimore, though it was necessary to cross part of the Alleghenies by stage. Sixteen days after he left New Orleans he arrived in Baltimore, and soon entered St. Charles College, Ellicott City, Md., then recently erected on land given by Charles Carroll, where he began his classical studies in preparation for the priesthood.

The next two years were spent at St. Charles, where the keenness of his mind and the thoroughness of his earlier education at once made him a pupil of note. He took up again the study of the ancient and modern classics, and so zealous was he to pursue these, that he wanted to remain another year, but Rev. Oliver L. Jenkins, president of the college, refused permission on the ground that he was already thoroughly equipped to enter St. Mary's Seminary, in Baltimore, and begin the second stage of his course. His character in those early days of his manhood seems to have made an impression on his fellow-students at St. Charles; but it was too early to predict for him, among so many other bright young men, that he would rise to any extraordinary height. His modesty and amiability tended to keep him in the background. One of his comrades was John S. Foley, later Bishop of Detroit, a member of a noted Catholic family of Baltimore, who, after the lapse of many years, wrote thus of his recollections of the future Cardinal:

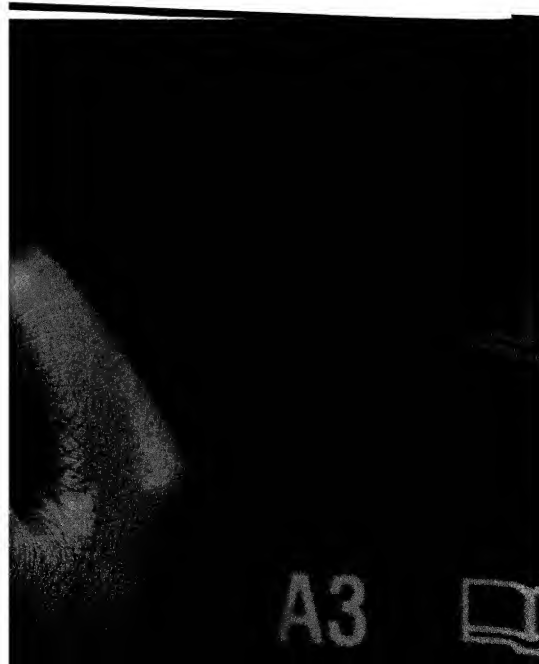
"The burdens of his high office have told upon his slender frame with advancing years, and yet as he rises before my mental retrospect I cannot see much change in the supple, trim figure that entered so ardently into our youthful sports. He still preserves the grace of movement of his early days, when with all his apparent delicacy he proved himself to be as elastic as tempered steel. Those were the days when the fixed rules of football a la Rugby were unknown or ignored, and I recall with an accelerated pulse the dash with which the Cardinal *in petto* broke into the melee around the elusive sphere

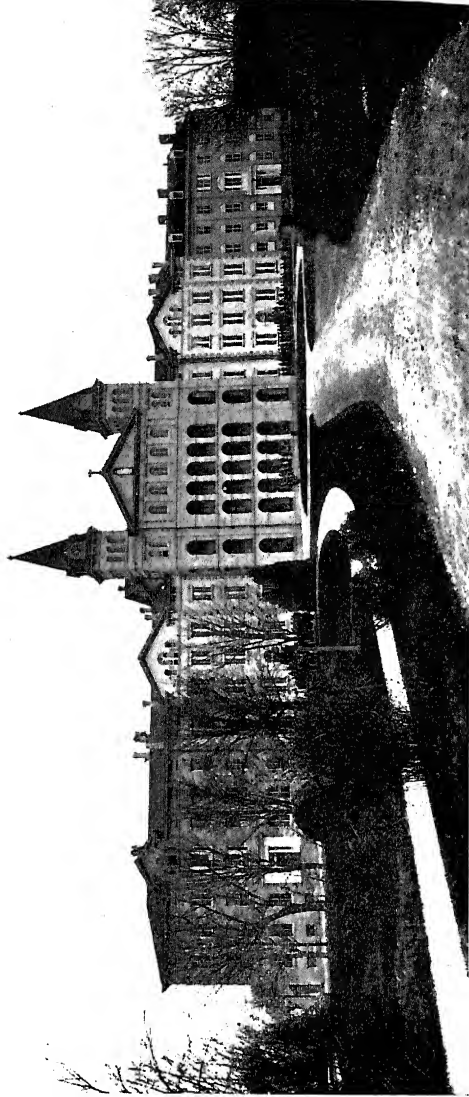
and ruthlessly beat down all opponents. Whatever he did was done with all his might, and that is the philosophy of his story. He engaged in his studies in the same earnest, indefatigable fashion that he exhibited at football or in the racquet court, and his mind was as active as his body, full of spring and resiliency. He was a youth, too, of noble and generous impulses, and his unaffected modesty was a most charming trait of his character. All these splendid attributes he has carried with him into the turbulent arena of life. * * * With him, life is real, life is earnest."

In September, 1857, he began his training at St. Mary's, under the presidency of Rev. Francois L'Homme, a French Sulpician. Owing to the inadequate facilities in those days, many American priests were still educated abroad, and a large number of others who labored among the American people were of foreign birth. The devoted fathers of St. Mary's had come to Baltimore in Bishop Carroll's time to begin the work of training a native priesthood, and French influence was still strong in the institution, whose mother house remained in Paris. Since the Council of Trent, the Church had insisted on rigorously thorough preparation for the duties of the ministry, and young men who aspired to that calling were forced to go where they could obtain the training. Protestant churches, which did not exact these requirements, early recruited their ministers from native soil, and accepted them with such education as they could obtain at home. The Lutheran clergy, most of whom still spoke German in the pulpit, continued to be predominantly Teutonic; and not a few of the Protestant Episcopal priesthood were Englishmen, or graduates of English colleges. A largely increasing number of Americans were seeking holy orders in the Catholic Church, and the tide was fast turning from Paris and Louvain.

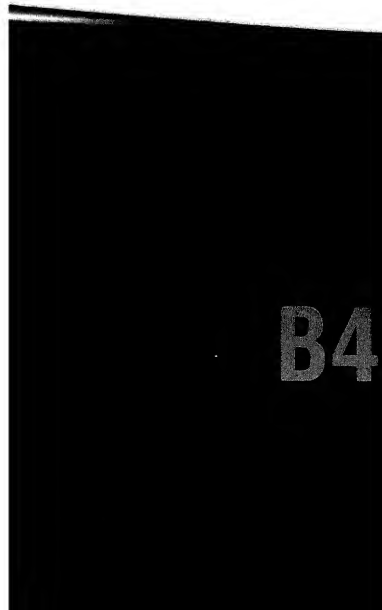
The training of the future Cardinal at St. Mary's was as strict as at European seminaries—the stern course in phi-

* Rely, Collections in the Life and Times of Cardinal Gibbons, Vol. 3, pp. 82, 83.





ST. CHARLES' COLLEGE, ELLICOTT CITY, MD., WHERE CARDINAL GIBBONS STUDIED



B4

RIGOROUS COURSE AT THE SEMINARY. 11

losophy, theology, scripture, church history and canon law; the prolonged meditations and devotions; the searching scrutiny of character, and the Spartan rigor of labors that might not stop for fatigue. Young Gibbons met every test, being described by his teachers as "having exceptional facility in his studies and as applying himself with great eagerness.*" He "possessed a cheerful and even temper, and gained the esteem and affection of all." Despite the severity of the course, he customarily spent an hour each day in devotional reading of scripture, instead of twenty minutes, which were obligatory. His success in philosophy was so marked that he was appointed master of the conferences held three times a week by the students to discuss the points covered by the lectures of the professor and to arrive at a fuller understanding of them. The professor of philosophy at that time, Rev. Francois P. Dissez, survived to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his entrance into the seminary, and he recalled throughout his long life the zeal and industry of his distinguished pupil.

Young Gibbons received the tonsure September 15, 1858, at the hands of Archbishop Kenrick, who conferred upon him the four minor orders June 16 of the following year. The same prelate promoted him to the subdiaconate June 28, 1861, to the diaconate June 29, and to the priesthood June 30.

Deep shadows were drawing over the country in those closing years at the seminary. In their brief periods devoted to general conversation the students had anxiously discussed the exciting events of the time—the John Brown raid, the fugitive slave riots, and the formation of the Southern Confederacy. Blood was already being shed in civil war when the young priest was ordained. His associations and sympathies were with the Southern people, among whom he had lived, but his judgment opposed secession as a political step. He remained a Union man to the end, though taking no part by word or

* Records of St. Mary's Seminary.

deed in the struggle that was rending his unhappy
His not to draw the sword, but to preach peace and
not to stir the passions of men, but to point them to the
ple of their Divine Master. He had chosen his path
the cross led, he would follow.

CHAPTER II.

AT ST. PATRICK'S AND ST. BRIDGET'S.

One Sunday morning in July, 1861, the congregation of St. Patrick's Church, Baltimore, saw within the sanctuary a young priest, lightly built, yet graceful and well-proportioned, of medium height, with a strong face and a large, firm mouth, softened by a singularly sweet and winning expression. When he spoke, his voice was clear, almost perfectly toned and musical, like the notes of a silver bell. The fascination of his manner won the hearts of all. That day he was introduced to members of the congregation as Father Gibbons, newly appointed as assistant to Rev. James Dolan, the veteran pastor of St. Patrick's. Not a few of them lived to see him, so rapid was his advancement, a member of the Sacred College, famed in America and Europe both as a shepherd of souls and a leader of men.*

Father Dolan, known as "The Apostle of the Point"—St. Patrick's is situated on Fell's Point—was a priest of vigorous and aggressive activity, who had long carried on a notably successful work in East Baltimore, unaided, and did not want an assistant. He had managed to find a separate field of labor for every one who had been sent to him, and Father Gibbons was no exception. Seven years before, Father Dolan, in his missionary zeal, had built a little church on the edge of the city's eastern boundary, in a district called Canton, and named it St. Bridget's, after the patron saint of his mother. It was then temporarily under the jurisdiction of St. Patrick's Parish, and Father Gibbons had not been ordained more than six

* Mr. John Malloy, of Baltimore, who survives at a venerable age (1911), recalls distinctly the brief period of Father Gibbons' life when he was stationed at St. Patrick's and the impression he produced on the congregation, of which Mr. Malloy was a member at the time.

ulation, unity of Church government would be at an end. They pronounced as reprehensible the complaint which had been made at a reunion of Bohemian societies in a previous year, that up to that time there had been no Bohemian in the American episcopate.

Regarding the Germans, they declared that the people of that nationality were not, by any means, a unit in support of the Cahensly point of view. There existed "what we may call the active party, whose object seems to be to preserve intact the German spirit among immigrants and their descendants, and to prevent them from changing their language for the English language, and to give a preponderating position to German influence in the Church in America." This was the party for which Father Abbelen spoke, and in behalf of which he was even then in Rome. They denied that he had in any way a representative character. The project of establishing a permanent Germany in America, it was shown, was approved only by a comparatively small proportion of immigrants, the great majority of whom desired complete and early identification with the institutions and language of their adopted country.

It was conceded that the German immigrants should have facilities for themselves and for their children to practice their religion in the language most familiar to them. To this end, the American bishops had been multiplying churches for the benefit of different nationalities. Yet, it was the tendency of the immigrant to get away from such a church as soon as possible, and to identify himself with the great mass of the people. German children who were taught their native language in the school spoke English by preference when they entered the recreation yard. The churches established for foreigners, and in which foreign languages were spoken from the pulpit and in the confessional, were constantly losing by the departure of parishioners to English-speaking parishes, though gaining, naturally, through the arrivals from Europe.

"The Church will never be strong in America," they continued; "she will never be sure of keeping within her fold the descendants of immigrants, Irish as well as others, until she has gained a decided ascendancy among the Americans themselves. Thank God, the time seems favorable for their conversion; prejudices are disappearing; there is a distinct movement toward the Church. To accelerate it, the Church naturally must, as far as it can be done without danger to other interests, be presented in a form attractive to Americans. The great objection which they have until now urged against her—an objection which at certain periods of their history they entertained so strongly as even to raise persecution—is that the Catholic Church is composed of foreigners; that it exists in America as a foreign institution, and that it is, consequently, a menace to the existence of the nation."

They insisted that there was no desire to exclude Germans from the American episcopate; but that only those should be bishops who knew the language of the country well, who understood the needs of the Church, and who could eradicate from themselves foreign nationalism.*

Cardinal Gibbons wrote to the Pontiff, fully stating his own views on the question. These were subsequently adopted at a meeting of the archbishops in Philadelphia, by whom a strong protest against Cahenslyism was drawn up and sent to the Propaganda. They urged three basic principles:

First, there should exist among all the parishes of the United States, without distinction of nationality, a perfect equality, and each should be independent of the other.

Second, it is not necessary that any privilege be accorded to any nationality in the administration of dioceses and parishes.

* Letter of Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane to Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Propaganda, Dec. 6, 1886.

Third, it is the plain duty of every bishop to do his utmost that all the faithful of all languages who may be in his diocese be taken care of with the same charity.

Cardinal Gibbons felt that there was great danger that the harmony and fraternal affection which had existed among the prelates of the United States would be broken. He insisted that the only way to arrest the evil was to refuse to recognize any distinction in the government of the Church; for, if one nationality were accorded special privileges, others would demand them also.

The Germans would have been glad to obtain the assistance of Cardinal Gibbons in behalf of the Cahensly movement. Throughout their agitation, most of them spoke of him with respect and even filial affection, because his conduct in the Diocese of Baltimore had been such as to remove any ground for charges of discrimination on account of nationality. The largest congregation in the city—St. Michael's—was German, presided over by Redemptorist Fathers, who conducted their ministrations in their own language. There were admirable church facilities for all German immigrants to be instructed in their own tongue. Poles, Bohemians, and other nationalities were similarly provided for. The Cardinal frequently visited these churches and co-operated with the pastors in the care of their flocks. The religious and material welfare of the immigrants was a subject close to his heart; and in his case as a bishop, criticism was disarmed before the fight began.

But, in the country at large, he saw great danger from Cahenslyism. He lost no suitable opportunity of openly declaring his own sentiments.

One of the characteristically bold acts of his life was the delivery of a strong sermon on this subject in Milwaukee, when he conferred the pallium on Archbishop Katzer in St. John's Cathedral, August 20, 1891. This ceremony was marked by the presence of more than 700 prelates and priests,

coming from almost every State in the Union and embracing every nationality represented among the American people. The Cardinal began his address by saying, after contemplation of the remarkable scene before him, that the Catholic Church in America was a family derived from many nations. He compared it to the heterogeneous multitude which assembled on the day of Pentecost, each person of whom heard in his own tongue the works of God proclaimed by the Apostles. He pointed out that a large proportion of the American bishops were natives of different countries in Europe; yet he ventured to say that in no country in Christendom were the members of the hierarchy more united and compact. "Woe to him, my brethren," he said, "who would destroy or impair this blessed harmony that reigns among us! Woe to him who would sow tares of discord in the fair field of the Church of America! Woe to him who would breed dissension among the leaders of Israel by introducing a spirit of nationalism into the camps of the Lord! Brothers we are, and brothers we shall remain. * * * 'God and our country!' this be our watchword. Next to love of God, should be love of our country. * * * Let us glory in the title of American citizen. To one country we owe allegiance, and that country is America. We must be in harmony with our political institutions. It matters not whether this is the land of our birth or our adoption. It is the land of our destiny."*

The training of a native clergy thoroughly in touch with the institutions of their country was one of his great objects. While the subject was at white heat, he made an address at the centennial celebration of St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, in October, 1891, in which he used these significant words:

"We can never, indeed, be sufficiently grateful for the apostolic labors of the clergy who have come to us from Europe in the past century. Without them, tens of thousands would

* Reilly, Collections in the Life of Cardinal Gibbons, Vol. II, p. 145 *et seq.*

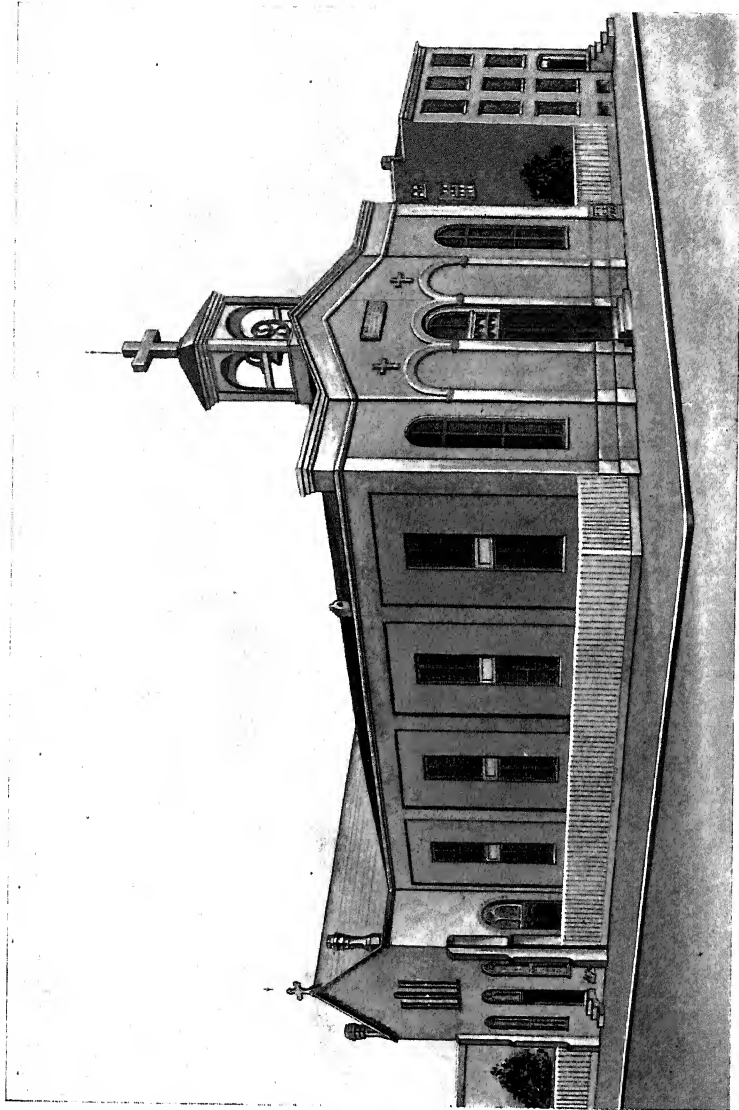
weeks when Father Dolan sent him there, saying, "Canton is a good school for a young priest." Toward the end of 1861 he was made full pastor of St. Bridget's by Archbishop Kenrick and began in an independent field the only work as a parish priest he was destined to do.

The neighborhood was semi-rural, and, in the temper of the times, turbulent and dangerous. Maryland alone, of all the American States, had lately been carried by the Know-nothing party, and Canton had been a favorite scene for the operations of the "Blood Tubs," a band composed of butchers and the lawless associates, who used to carry half-hogsheads of blood to the polling places and bespatter with the gory contents citizens who would not vote the anti-foreign ticket. The fury of this movement had not fully subsided when the Civil War with its violent clashes of opinion in a border State, rent the city asunder with excitement. Federal troops had taken possession of Baltimore and erected a chain of fortifications, one of which, Fort Marshall, was thrown up in what is now Highlandtown, within the boundaries of St. Bridget's parish. Armed force took the place of law, and the volunteer soldiers not yet trained to the restrictions of discipline, terrorized the community.*

It was under these trying circumstances that Father Gibbons began his pastorate. The Church was in a lonely place, surrounded by farms and market gardens. Only one dwelling—that of Mrs. Bridget Smyth, a devoted member of the congregation, four of whose grandsons became priests—was near. The rectory consisted of a few small rooms built against one end of the church, lacking in light and ventilation, the boards of the floor touching the ground. The good Mrs. Smyth pitied the hardships of the young pastor and sent him his first meal on the Saturday evening when he went to Canton to begin his labors.†

* Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, p. 132.

† Surviving members of the Smyth family are authority for these statements.



ST. BRIDGET'S CHURCH, BALTIMORE, IN 1865



The congregation included some of the neighboring rural population, but was chiefly composed of laboring men from the copper works and rolling mills scattered along the Canton waterfront. With his tireless activity and remarkable faculty of making friends, Father Gibbons soon knew them all by name. So vivid was his memory for names and faces that the absorbing mental impressions of later years were never able to blot out his recollection of the devout flock of St. Bridget's, and his smile and instant recognition were theirs whenever he met them.

Soon after going to Canton, Archbishop Kenrick directed him to take charge of St. Lawrence's Church, since renamed for Our Lady of Good Counsel, on Locust Point, a mile across the Patapsco. In this capacity he served as volunteer chaplain at Fort McHenry, as well as at Fort Marshall. Every Sunday morning, in winter storms as well as summer calms, he left Canton about 6 o'clock, was rowed in a skiff across to Locust Point, heard confessions at St. Lawrence's, said mass, preached, baptized, attended sick calls; then recrossed the river to Canton; where he celebrated high mass at half-past 10 o'clock and preached again. No obstacle deterred him. His kindhearted housekeeper used to bundle him up in stormy weather and tie her shawl over his head, but many of his trips meant keen suffering. When the river was impassable, he would travel to St. Lawrence's in a sleigh or carriage, crossing at the head of the harbor by way of Light street, several miles up. As no Catholic clergyman may celebrate mass except while fasting, it was usually about 1 o'clock in the afternoon when, after a morning's arduous labor, he could eat. This ordeal seriously impaired his digestion and compelled him to observe great care in diet throughout his life. "It killed my stomach," he used to say.

The decline of his health caused some of his parishioners to express the opinion at one time that he "could not live two months." Tuberculosis was suspected; but one day he re-

turned from an examination by his doctor and joyfully announced that his lungs were sound.* The living conditions of the rectory were bad enough, but he made them worse by devoting a part of his limited quarters to the purposes of a hall for fairs and church meetings, leaving only a small sleeping-room which he called his own. When a fair was in progress at a late hour he would sometimes pass through the hall, returning from a pastoral call, and bid the merrymakers a smiling goodnight, saying, "I must go to bed now," as he disappeared in his little apartment. Directly above his living-room he established a parochial school, and the noise and trampling overhead did not seem to diminish his satisfaction that the children of his parish were thus provided for.

When he was able to obtain sufficient means, he built a new and suitable rectory of brick, in conformity with the style of the church. In order to carry out this project, he had to raise a considerable sum of money. As a means to the end, he decided to secure a large building in the center of the city for a fair, and applied to the lessee of Carroll Hall, a noted place for public assemblies in those days. At first the lessee assumed an air of suspicious coldness and was far from inclined to grant the request. After Father Gibbons had explained the circumstances to him more fully, his attitude changed and he readily yielded, besides making ample apologies for what had seemed discourtesy. A few words explained all. "I thought you were a Yankee," said this stout-hearted sympathizer with the Confederacy.

The war feeling was so intense that part of the congregation of the Cathedral left on several occasions when the prayer for the authorities was said. This prayer had been framed by Archbishop Carroll, and, among other things, besought that

* Mr. John J. Donnelly and Mrs. Peter Hagan, members of St. Bridget's Congregation, 1861-65, who lived to old age, recalled distinctly a number of incidents of that period, which have been incorporated in this work. Many traditions linger from the same period, which have been rejected unless confirmed.



the people might be "preserved in union," which by no means accorded with the views of the secessionists.

Natural inclination developed in earlier years, and the large area of his parish, in which there were no street cars at the time, made Father Gibbons a pedestrian, and this tended to restore his health. His habit of taking long walks has continued through life, and has been, perhaps, the most potent means of sustaining him in the manifold and prolonged activities, the endurance of which so often created amazement in others. He seemed going all the time. No detail of the field was too small to receive his painstaking attention; no locality too dangerous to be penetrated by the devoted priest, bent on his mission of mercy and help.

His duties at Fort McHenry required courage and circumspection. This place, hallowed in American history, had been made a prison for Confederate soldiers and for civilians who fell under the ban. Members of the Maryland Legislature suspected of favoring secession were held there by the power of the bayonet. Among the noted prisoners were George William Brown, Severn Teackle Wallis, Ross Winans and George P. Kane. Father Gibbons ministered to Federal and Confederate alike. At one time there were in the fort four Confederates who had been sentenced to be hanged. Three of them—John R. H. Embert, Samuel B. Hearn and Braxton Lyon—had been with the army in Virginia, and, in a lull of the campaign, had succeeded in crossing the Chesapeake to visit their families on the Eastern Shore. Though not spies, they were arrested as such, court-martialed, and received the death sentence with another Confederate, William H. Rodgers, said to have been a blockade-runner.* Father Gibbons was called to attend Embert. The sentence was to be executed immediately after 12 o'clock Sunday night, August 29, 1864; but when the

* Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Series 2, Vol. 7, pp. 792, 834, 1040, 1291; Vol. 8, pp. 87, 114, 115, 132, 395, 436, 650.

young priest arrived at the gate of the fort to prepare the prisoner for death, he was told that the penalty had been commuted by President Lincoln a few hours before to imprisonment during the war. John W. Garrett, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and other prominent men had interceded for the four Confederates and the merciful President had lent a ready ear.

The men thus snatched from the verge of the grave by executive clemency were sent to Albany. After the close of the war, when Father Gibbons had been transferred to the Cathedral, he was surprised to receive a visit from Embert. Their greetings were warm, but were scarcely over before his caller said:

"Father, I am delighted to see you under more favorable circumstances than confronted us at Fort McHenry; and, as you did not have the opportunity of tying the knot around my neck on that occasion, I ask you now to tie a more pleasing knot."

He had come to be married, and Father Gibbons performed the ceremony.

The young clergyman's courage was repeatedly proved in those stirring times. Returning to St. Bridget's rectory one night, he found a soldier asleep in the yard, and started to arouse him with an admonition to leave the church property. The soldier leaped to his feet, seized a paling from a broken fence and rushed at him with the fury of a tiger. Father Gibbons turned and ran toward his door, but soon found himself trapped in an angle formed by wall and fence from which there was no escape. The soldier had the paling raised to strike him a murderous blow, when, realizing that he must defend himself quickly, he summoned all his strength, knocked the man down and thoroughly subdued him. When the big soldier came to his senses he realized that the frail young man in priestly dress was more than his match, and beat a precipitate retreat.



On another night, arriving at his rectory after collecting money for the church, he was met outside the door by his housekeeper, in tears, who told him a crazy man was inside. It proved to be an intruder of herculean size, naked and raving, who had taken possession of the premises and was threatening everybody. Father Gibbons found no weapon at hand but an umbrella, with which he belabored the man to such good effect that in a short time he forced him to dress and leave the house.

He was often in danger from drunken soldiers, and always avoided a conflict when he could do so, but when that was not possible, proved that he could defend himself against any.

The entries of Father Gibbons in the parish record of St. Bridget's, written in a delicate and well-proportioned but firm hand, have been carefully preserved by the pastors who have succeeded him. They tell the ordinary story of a priest's life—baptisms, weddings, financial details. He neglected nothing, and became as familiar a figure to the people of Canton as the smokestacks of their mills. His own congregation was devoted to the young priest, and, as he was never heard to say anything distasteful to non-Catholics or to refuse his ministrations to any, he was almost as well liked by those of faiths different from his own. Traits that were to mark him in later life were developing strongly. He was an accurate judge of men and women, and had a remarkable faculty for organization, which he put to good use in stimulating the work of the church in every direction. The young folk would walk miles to help him, and the older parishioners were charmed by his respectful and sincere attentions. Not infrequently he was called to travel long distances out the suburban roads which led into Baltimore through the Canton district, for churches were few and priests fewer in those days, even in Maryland. Sparse outlying communities were in many cases too poor to support pastors, and the political and economic confusion of the times arrested the spread of the gospel.

Baltimore was passing through a dreadful experience during the period of his pastorate at St. Bridget's. Known to be predominantly in sympathy with the South, the city worked and slept at the mouths of cannon planted by General B. F. Butler on Federal Hill, a bold eminence in the southern part of the city. Thousands of young Baltimoreans had passed the gauntlet of the Union lines and gone south to fight for the Confederacy, leaving their families behind, racked by anxiety and scanning with sickened hearts the latest bulletins of bloody losses at the front. Other thousands had voluntarily entered or been drafted into the Federal army, and wife, son and daughter counted themselves fortunate if their loved ones came back wounded, but living. When the Southern tide rose with the genius of Lee, precautions at Washington were doubled to prevent Maryland from falling into the hands of the Confederacy; and in the agonized waiting at the end, while the requiem of the new republic was being sounded by the artillery around Petersburg, none in Baltimore knew who was friend or foe.

On the night of Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Father Gibbons was preaching in St. Joseph's Church, Baltimore. His topic was the crucifixion. With one of those apt similes which were characteristic of his literary and oratorical style, he pictured a benevolent ruler, exercising his authority with clemency, suddenly stricken down by the hand of a subject. A short time after the congregation had been dismissed the streets filled with people, and from lip to lip passed the fateful bulletin, "Lincoln has been shot!" In the light of the tragedy which startled the world, the words of Father Gibbons took on a strange significance. That night there was a terrible commotion in Baltimore. A week later the body of the murdered President was brought to the city, and Father Gibbons, with some of the other clergy, marched in the procession which escorted it to the rotunda of the Exchange, where it lay in State.*

* Scharf, *Chronicles of Baltimore*, p. 634.



Among the congregations which he served there was deep sympathy with the South; but he went about his work without mingling in the polemics of the time, though his heart bled for the agonies of the helpless which are always the fruit of war, no matter what the issue to be decided, nor under what flag the sword be unsheathed.

CHAPTER III.

SECRETARY TO ARCHBISHOP SPALDING.

The talents of Father Gibbons, combined with his piety and indefatigable zeal, attracted the attention of Archbishop Spalding, who had been raised in 1864 from the Bishopric of Louisville to the See of Baltimore, after the death of Archbishop Kenrick. It had been remarked of the young priest, as his powers developed, that he seemed "destined for leadership," though he had scant opportunity to show his real mettle in the little field of St. Bridget's. The shock was great to the devoted congregation when it was announced in October, 1865, that he had been transferred to the Cathedral as the Archbishop's secretary, and the people of Canton could hardly realize that the smiling face and gentle ministrations which had become interwoven as a part of their daily lives were to be missed from among them. A petition to have him retained was started, but it was soon seen that this would be futile.

It was a time when the Church had need of her strong men. The passions following the Civil War were at their worst, and grew daily in ferocity. The United States Government had used pressure at Rome against the appointment of Archbishop Spalding, because it was feared that he was not sufficiently in accord with the policy of repression toward the South.* This had failed, and the Church had been able to proceed serenely on her mission, unclouded by the storms of the political atmosphere. Whole States were in ruin, and the ministrations of religion were more necessary, and at the same time much more

* O'Gorman, *History of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States*, p. 433; Shea, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, Vol. 4, p. 493; Riordan, *Cathedral Records*, Baltimore, p. 77.

difficult to convey, than before the gigantic conflict. Hundreds of families in the Diocese of Baltimore, as elsewhere, were mourning the loss of father, brother, son. In the counties of Southern Maryland, the soil in which the Catholic faith had first taken root among English-speaking people in the Western Hemisphere, the slaves had been freed, and poverty spread its shadow where the refinements of an affluent aristocracy had lately flourished.

To meet the emergency by dealing comprehensively with all the pressing problems of the Church in America, the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore was convened in the Cathedral in October, 1866. Father Gibbons was made its assistant chancellor, and for the first time was thrown into an arena where the larger outlook of the Church immediately confronted him. He fitted into these surroundings as if they had always been a part of him. A natural statesman, who might have been a Richelieu in world politics had he been a typical Frenchman of the seventeenth century instead of a typical American of the nineteenth, men of lesser parts instinctively looked to him. Where others might be unprogressive, impractical, out of touch with the times, too ardent or controversial, he was cool, judicial, far-seeing, enlightened, inspired by sentiments of lofty patriotism, as well as by the brilliant fire of apostolic zeal. He was already formulating in his mind those grand ideas which he was one day to impress on the world; and his contact with the leading men of the American Church served to give him the bearings with which he might start on his real career.

Archbishop Spalding presided over the council, and to Father Gibbons, as his secretary and the assistant chancellor, fell a large share of the work of the gathering. Among its most important acts was the creation of a number of new dioceses, subject to confirmation by the Holy See, to stimulate the spread of the faith in the stricken South and the growing communities of the North and West. One of these was the vicariate

apostolic of North Carolina. So strong an impression had Father Gibbons made on the assembled bishops that, though but 32 years old and only five years removed from the seminary, he was unanimously nominated for this important post.

The decrees of the council were signed by seven archbishops, thirty-nine bishops or their procurators, and two abbots. An important declaration, destined to be quoted as a precedent by the fathers of the Church in Rome itself in a few years, related to the office of the Supreme Pontiff. The council decreed that he spoke with "the living and infallible authority" of the whole Church, "which was built by Christ upon Peter, who is the head, body and pastor of the whole Church, whose faith Christ promised should never fail; which ever had legitimate pontiffs, dating their origin in unbroken line from Peter himself, being seated in his chair and being the inheritors and defenders of the like doctrine, dignity, office and power."

The other decrees of the council need not be cited at length here. Among the many subjects treated were the dissensions among Protestant sects, and zeal for their conversion. Unitarianism and Universalism were condemned, the one as denying the divinity of Christ, and the other as rejecting the doctrine of eternal punishment. Transcendentalism and Pantheism were defined as human systems, which, having dethroned God, would make a deity of man. Warnings were given against spiritism and magnetism. There was held to be little reason for doubt that some of the manifestations of spiritism were the works of Satan. It was pointed out that the leaders of the system deny the divinity of Christ and the supernatural in religion.

Preachers, it was declared, were to employ an explanatory, rather than a controversial, style in their sermons, and to adapt themselves to the capacity of their auditors. In reprehending vices, they were never to become personal. They should declare the truth fearlessly, without being influenced by human motives. Attacks were not to be made from the pul-



pit on public magistrates, nor were priests to mingle political and civic topics with religious doctrines. Care must be taken not to bestow undue praise in funeral orations. Prolixity in sermons was to be avoided. Priests should avoid recourse to civil tribunals when possible. They should abstain from all improper spectacles and games. Regarding money matters, they were not to be importunate in addressing their congregations. The practice of taking money on deposit, for which interest was to be paid, was condemned. The clergy should avoid idleness as a pest. Greater provision for the education of priests, and for the erection of preparatory schools as well as seminaries, was recommended.

It was decreed that mixed marriages were to be discouraged. Bishops should seek to use a uniform method in granting matrimonial dispensations. Catholics might be buried with sacred rites in a non-Catholic cemetery if they possessed a lot in such a place, provided it was not obtained in contempt of Church law. Free burial must be given the poor. Entrance money was not to be collected at churches.

Stress was laid on the proper education of youth. It was urged that parish schools should be erected by every congregation, and the instruction, when possible, should be by teachers belonging to religious congregations. Catechism classes were to be instituted in the churches for children who attended the public schools. A strong desire for the establishment of a Catholic University in the United States—a dream to be realized in the near future—was expressed.

In addition to the Masonic order, long previously condemned by the Church, the Odd Fellows and the Sons of Temperance were forbidden. The faithful, it was decreed, should not enter any society which, having designs against church or state, bound its members with an oath of secrecy.*

The council adjourned after a session of two weeks. Its closing ceremonies were attended by President Andrew John-

* *Acta et Decreta Conc. Plen. II, Baltimore, 1868. Sermons and Pastoral Letter, Second Plenary Council, published by Kelly & Piet, Baltimore, 1868.*

son, whom Father Gibbons met on that occasion, the first of a long line of Presidents whom he was to know and with many of whom he was to have close and important relations.*

The nominations of the new bishops were not confirmed until 1868, and in the meantime Father Gibbons continued his work at the Cathedral. In January, 1866, he had established the first Sunday-school there, and it became so popular that he was able to report, in a letter to the Secretary of the Maryland Senate calling attention to the work of the parochial schools, that its average attendance in 1867 was 500. He taught classes in catechism regularly at Calvert Hall School and St. Mary's Orphan Asylum. His sermons soon attracted attention, and he was in demand at churches throughout the city. At this period the rare gifts as an orator in the best sense, which were to make him one of the foremost preachers of his time, were being rapidly perfected by experience and matured thought. The classical simplicity and beauty of his English could not fail to charm; his logic was sound, his learning solid; and the clearness and sweetness of his voice, which could fill a large hall without effort, combined with magnetism of manner that gripped the attention instantly, formed a rare medium for the virile ideas with which his pulpit utterances teemed.

In a remarkable degree he had the confidence of Archbishop Spalding, as he had later of Bayley, the successor of Spalding. The Baltimore Cathedral has long been a cradle of bishops, and the young secretary in 1865-68 proved to be the brightest ornament of them all. The surroundings are singularly well adapted to bring out of priests their capacity for the executive work of the Church. They live in the Archbishop's house and sit at his table. Here not only the affairs of the diocese, but, to a large extent, those of the American Church center. All avenues lead to the seat of the primatial see, and in this sense Baltimore is the Rome of America. The parish contains some of the most important Catholic families of the United States,

* Shea, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, Vol. 4, p. 720.





CARDINAL GIBBONS AS PRIEST IN 1866
FATHER GIBBONS STANDING, REV HENRY B COSKERY, V. G., IS SEATED



pillars of the Church since the days of Leonard Calvert. The clergy thus have under their spiritual care a highly cultivated element, in whose social life they mingle and from whose environment they draw a certain inspiration.

The archiepiscopal residence stands in dignified semi-isolation on a large lot on Charles street, in surroundings which in 1865-68 were almost Athenian in their refinement. It is of gray stone and brick, two stories high, with a large basement, and is constructed in the breadth of proportion characteristic of Baltimore homes of the better class in the early half of the nineteenth century, but without any trace of magnificence of architecture or ornament. At the rear a paved walk leads to the Cathedral, which stands, like the house, on a hill where the victorious troops of Rochambeau encamped on the return from Yorktown in 1782. A tall flight of steps leads to the front door of the house, which sets back in a recess of the wall. Inside is an English hallway extending the full length of the building, flanked on each side by spacious rooms, furnished with marked simplicity—almost scantily. Not a trace of luxury can be seen. On the walls are religious paintings and portraits of prelates identified with the archdiocese, with a bust or two here and there. A bay window, standing out boldly, is a vantage point for reviewing parades.

The residence was originally a small building, erected in the administration of Archbishop Whitfield and occupied by him for the first time in 1830. Captain William Kennedy and his wife contributed a large sum in 1865, by means of which two wings were built and another story added. A conspicuous tablet in the library commemorates this gift.

Here, when Father Gibbons was a member of Archbishop Spalding's household, was the heart of fashionable Baltimore. Across the street and up and down were the houses of the rich and cultured, the historic families of Maryland, and on the sidewalks trooped the belles and beaux of the town. Charles street at that point does not twist sharply like its neighbor,



St. Paul street, which is said to have followed the tracks of a cow-path originally; but so numerous are the hills that scarcely a level spot is to be found. Inside and outside the archiepiscopal residence the atmosphere is one of lofty things, and every priest who has lived there has felt its stimulus.



CHAPTER IV.

VICAR APOSTOLIC OF NORTH CAROLINA.

In the Baltimore Cathedral, where he had been baptized, ordained, and at whose altar he had served as priest, Father Gibbons was consecrated titular bishop of Adramyttum and vicar apostolic of North Carolina August 16, 1868. He stood among the venerable men there assembled the youngest member of the American hierarchy. Rev. Thomas A. Becker, who had also been a member of the "school of bishops"—the Cathedral household—was raised to the See of Wilmington, Del., at the same time. The two new prelates received the crozier, ring and miter at the hands of their friend and patron, Archbishop Spalding. Another Cathedral priest, Rev. Thomas Foley, chancellor of the diocese, and afterward Bishop of Chicago, delivered the sermon.*

It was a beautiful day, and a great crowd assembled to witness the imposing ecclesiastical ceremony. As always on important occasions at the Cathedral, the procession was long, including the students from St. Charles College and St. Mary's Seminary, immediately in the rear of the cross-bearer, acolytes and sanctuary boys. Then came the clergy of the diocese, the superiors of religious orders, the bishops and archbishops. The hierarchy of the day was well represented by Bishops O'Hara, of Scranton, and Shanahan, of Harrisburg, themselves newly consecrated; Bayley, of Newark, destined to succeed to the See of Baltimore and exercise a strong influence on Bishop Gibbons' life; McGill, of Richmond, whose chair he was to occupy four years later; Whelan, of Wheeling; Domenec, of Pitts-

* An extended account of these ceremonies was given in the *Catholic Mirror*, the church paper of the Baltimore Archdiocese, August 22, 1868, which is authority for many of the facts related here.

burg, and Lynch, of Charleston. Dr. Henry B. Coskery, vicar-general of the diocese, was a deacon-of-honor to the Archbishop and shared the regrets of the Cathedral household in losing such an agreeable and useful companion.

Father Foley spoke from an overflowing heart in the words of his sermon addressed to the new vicar apostolic. "And you, Right Reverend Sir," he said, "are to go to the large State of North Carolina. It appalls one to think of that State of more than a million inhabitants, with but a few altars and one or two priests to minister at them. This is the work which the Holy Ghost, which the Supreme Pontiff, which the united body of our bishops in council assembled, have cut out for you, a work which plainly bespeaks the character which you hold with them. It would not do for me to speak from personal observation and with the feelings which I bear toward you. You have been associated with us, like your Right Reverend companion, at this altar. You were of our household and home. We have had the opportunity of observing in both not only those great characteristics which ought to be found in every Christian priest, but also those interior traits of virtue which embellish and complete the man of God. We, then, who have lived with you for years, if our testimony be of avail, added to that which the Holy Spirit, the Supreme Pontiff and the prelates of our country have given, cheerfully and truthfully offer it. We have seen you both doing the toil of the priesthood, helping the poor, instructing the ignorant, visiting the sick at all hours; thinking nothing too laborious or too fatiguing for yourself and always willing to take not only your share of the labors, but ready to take a larger portion, that you might relieve your brother priests.

"Again, I say to you, that I cannot congratulate you on going to North Carolina, but I do rejoice for the honor which the Church of God has conferred on you, and I congratulate your flock, few and scattered, upon the advantage they are to derive from the apostolic mission you are to establish in that



State, which, in a religious sense, may be called a desert. It will not be long, I predict, before that desert will be made to bloom and produce much fruit, and your vicariate, now so poor and uninviting, will be able to compare with other dioceses of longer existence in religious prosperity."

The young Bishop remained in Baltimore a short time, confirming a class at his former church, St. Bridget's, dedicating St. Joseph's Monastery, since noted as a center for the work of the Passionists, and otherwise assisting Archbishop Spalding.

The Archbishop and Rev. Bernard J. McManus, of St. John's Church, Baltimore, accompanied him to Wilmington, N. C., where he arrived on Friday evening, October 30. He was received with joy by a delegation of the laity, headed by Rev. Mark S. Gross, a beloved priest of St. Thomas' Church, the only sanctuary of the Catholic faith in the city. The Bishop and his companions were taken in carriages to the residence of Col. F. W. Kerchner, one of the principal residents, a parishioner of St. Thomas', who welcomed them with southern hospitality. Major Reilly made an address in behalf of the laity, expressing gratitude that at last a bishop had been sent to North Carolina to build up the work of the Church and pledging the co-operation of Catholics as far as their means would go.

The new bishop responded with deep sincerity, thanking the faithful for their reception and hoping that the future would strengthen the bonds already established between the diocese and himself. He knew that the Catholics in the State were few and far between. He had not come among them to seek personal comfort; sent by constituted authority, he had only one object—their spiritual good and the salvation of souls. Regardless of sacrifices and difficulties, he was ready to expend his utmost efforts in the work, and he did not doubt that he would receive cordial co-operation. Archbishop Spalding spoke briefly, encouraging the Carolinians with hopes for the spread of the faith.

But there was another side to the picture. On the night following Bishop Gibbons' arrival, he beheld for the first time a torchlight procession of negroes, who were then, by alliance with the "carpet-baggers" from the North, in political control of the State. As he described the scene, it appeared like an inferno. "Is my lot to be cast in these surroundings?" he thought, with dismay. These wild and ignorant elements, suddenly sprung from slavery to power, had shaken the political and social fabric of the state to its foundations. Power to them meant an opportunity for turning loose the impulses of savagery. They even seized churches and devoted them to any use that suited their whim.

Soon after the new bishop arrived he was told of how the Catholic Church at New Bern had been saved a short time before from destruction. Captain McNamara, of the Federal Army, was riding past the church, when he saw a body of persons gathered about the door, apparently in charge of it, and asked their business.

"We have occupied this church for school purposes," said one of them.

"What is your authority?" inquired the Captain.

"Our authority is that of the United States Government and of Jesus Christ," answered the school mistress.

"Well," remarked the Captain, "that is pretty good authority; but, as a Federal officer, I am accustomed to obey written authority. Can you show papers from the sources you have mentioned?"

The teacher was at a loss for words, and the Captain continued:

"As you cannot produce the papers, my order is that you vacate this church at once and enter it no more for such purposes."

The shadow of the negro and "carpet-bagger" regime stretched from the mountains to the sea. On the first occasion when the bishop went to vote in the State, a negro official



demanded that he show naturalization papers, and he had difficulty in convincing the suspicious black that he was native born. Another negro official ordered him peremptorily to tear down a frame shed on the church property in Wilmington because a city ordinance provided that buildings should be of brick or stone. The bishop pointed out that wooden buildings were standing on city property, but the negro insisted, and he was forced to cover the shed with tin.

Writing later of his experiences at this period,* he expressed the view that, "While right-thinking men are ready to accord to the colored citizen all to which he is fairly entitled, yet to give him control over a highly intellectual and intricate civilization, in creating which he has borne no essential part, and for conducting which his antecedents have manifestly unfitted him, would be hurtful to the country as well as to himself." In a subsequent political campaign in Maryland† he declared himself publicly against taking the suffrage from the negroes, but he adhered consistently to the view that their domination in political affairs would be madness.

On the Sunday after his arrival, the Bishop was installed in St. Thomas' Church. A pouring autumn rain descended, but the Church was filled. Archbishop Spalding preached a sermon, which served as a cordial introduction of the new prelate to the vicariate. "Your Bishop," he said, "was recommended by the Council of Bishops held in Baltimore a few years ago. He received their unanimous vote and holds his commission from Rome. I know him well. He is beloved by all who know him in Baltimore. There are few Catholics here, and they are poor. We cannot expect much at first. The Kingdom of God, steady in its increase, is the work of more than 1,800 years. The apostles were poor. They enriched the world with their heroic deeds of Christianity. They never failed, nor will they ever fail in their successors. I recommend your

* Reminiscences of Cardinal Gibbons read before the United States Catholic Historical Society of New York, May 25, 1891.

† 1908.

Bishop to you, not only to Catholics, but to all good Christian men who have the spread of Christ's religion on earth at heart. * * * He has not yet chosen his seat. For the present, he will reside among you. He improves upon acquaintance. Though he will be found uncompromising in his principles of faith, he will be charitable to all, assist all, irrespective of sect or creed."

Bishop Gibbons postponed his own address to the congregation until vespers the same day. On that occasion he began with expressions of gratitude to the Archbishop, who had left many pressing duties in Baltimore, "at the call of friendship," to install him in his new diocese. He had come among them as a stranger, and yet he could not look upon himself in that light, called, as he was, by the Supreme Head of the Church to be their spiritual father. Although he knew scarcely a face among all those in front of him, he knew the people of the diocese as citizens and sons of the South, for so was he. They were not only united to one another by the bonds of a common faith, but were brothers linked by the ties of a common country and having the same material interests. He had not doubted that a welcome awaited him in North Carolina, and would do his best to prove worthy of it.*

The field, as Father Foley had intimated, was almost untilled. In the whole vicariate there were but three priests—Father Gross, Rev. Lawrence P. O'Connell and Rev. H. P. Northrop—and about 800 Catholics. The faith which Bishop Gibbons had come to teach was not understood, but his wide sympathies and singular freedom from prejudice well fitted him for his trying task. Father O'Connell was stationed at Charlotte, and Father Northrop, afterward Bishop of Charleston, was at New Bern. Undaunted by his difficulties, the young Bishop began his labors. As in many Southern churches, four small rooms had been partitioned off behind the sanctuary in the rear of St. Thomas—two on the ground

* *Catholic Mirror*, Nov. 14, 1868; *Wilmington Daily Journal*, Nov. 3, 1868.



ST THOMAS' CHURCH, WILMINGTON, N. C.



floor and two upstairs—and these formed the pastoral residence. Father Gross shared his narrow quarters with the Bishop, there being no means to provide an episcopal house. These two devoted men of God were attached to each other by the warmest personal ties. Father Gross' large-hearted charity led him to give away so much that Bishop Gibbons sometimes found himself hard pressed to supply the funds for their little establishment. It was said of this saintly priest that if he had more than one hat or pair of trousers, he was sure to bestow the extra one on some needy parishioner. On one occasion, when he entered a store, it was noticed that he wore a laced shoe on one foot and a buttoned shoe on the other. When asked about it, he replied that he had given a pair to a poor man and had not noticed that they were not alike.

The Bishop had raised \$7,000 before he left Baltimore to buy additional ground adjoining St. Thomas' Church, which was a small building and which he designed to enlarge. He spent some time in consolidating the foundations of the work in Wilmington, and then started on a tour of his diocese. Throughout the State he traveled, preaching and teaching, studying each locality, and, wherever opportunity offered, planting the seeds of a Catholic congregation. The leading people of the State, Protestants as well as Catholics, received him in their homes. When no other means were available, he instructed and preached in Protestant churches, courthouses, public halls, and even in Masonic lodge rooms. On a visit to Greenville, which he reached early one morning by boat, he went to the hotel to register, and met Dr. O'Hagan, a Protestant physician, who insisted that the Bishop should be his guest. During the morning he held a sort of levee. When it was learned that he intended to preach, the local judge offered him the use of the courthouse, and the trustees of the Methodist church put their house of worship at his disposal. He chose the church, and preached there at night to a large congregation, nearly all of whom were Protestants. The people



were summoned by the church bell; the choir was the regular one of the church; the Bishop read from a Protestant Bible, and the only part of the service which was of his own faith was the sermon.

Everywhere crowds flocked to hear this liberal and zealous apostle of the faith. They felt a pride in the youthful prelate, their own Bishop, pre-eminently a man of the people, mingling with all and winning friends everywhere by his rare graces of manner. His gifts as a preacher were enough in themselves to form an attraction in the communities to which he went. Aimed especially to win those who were full of hostility to his creed, his sermons were of the simple truths of the gospel, the brotherhood of man, duty to God and country. Prejudice melted before his words. In the broken condition of the South, it was recognized on every hand that where Bishop Gibbons founded a church, it was an element of stability, of spiritual, social and material improvement, an inspiration to hope and progress. Carolinians knew that he felt their woes and shared in their struggle upward from the ruins left by war. It was said of him that he came to know every Catholic in the State by name.

His hardships in his travels would have taxed the strongest frame. One of his converts was Dr. J. C. Monk, a physician who lived at Newton Grove, nearly a hundred miles from Wilmington. His own account of Dr. Monk's conversion was as follows:*

"While I was absent in Europe at the Vatican Council, in 1870, a letter came through the post addressed 'To Any Catholic Priest of Wilmington, N. C.' Father Gross received the letter, which was one of inquiry about the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and from Dr. J. C. Monk. A correspondence was opened between us after my return from Rome. I recommended certain Catholic books. Dr. Monk procured these, and, having more fully instructed himself and his family in

* Reminiscences of Cardinal Gibbons read before the United States Catholic Historical Society of New York.

the faith, he and his household were all received into the Church. He came to Wilmington to make a profession of faith. I baptized the family and learned, with the deepest interest, of the circumstances that had led to his conversion and of his hopes in regard to the community in which he had lived all his life as a prominent physician.

"This was a remarkable conversion. The finger of God was here. Nor was the conversion to be barren of results. Dr. Monk returned home, after receiving my promise of a visit to his family. In due time Father Gross visited Newton Grove, and to a great throng in the open air preached on the true faith. From that time an earnest inquiry into the tenets of the Catholic Church sprang up among the people. Dr. Monk was a providential man for the diffusion of the faith. He was highly respected, and as a physician had access to every family in all that region. His zeal to enlighten the people was surpassed only by his solid piety and good example. Possessed of means, he liberally aided in every way the spread of the faith.

"A few months later I redeemed my promise of a visit to Newton Grove. The trip came near imperiling my life. I remember it was the month of March. The day of my departure opened with difficulties. The railway train left very early in the morning. Rising at 4 o'clock, I found the weather cold and rainy. The carriage failing to call for me, I was compelled, with the help of a boy, to carry my large, heavy valise, packed with mission articles, the distance of a mile to the depot. As I traveled northward, the rain became a furious storm of sleet and snow. Reaching the station, I found the brother of Dr. Monk, who had come to meet me, and on horseback, too, with ax in hand, to cut our way through the forests. The sleet and snow had covered the country and bound to earth, in many places across our course, the pine saplings that grew in dense bodies up to the margin of the road. A neighbor was with him to take me in his buggy. We started. It was a journey to be remembered—a trip of 21 miles in the

teeth of wind, rain, sleet and snow. After a short exposure, I was all but frozen by the violence of the storm and the intense cold. We had ridden a number of miles, when, to my delight, my friend drew rein at his own house. I entered the hospitable door, and the change was most grateful—from cold and misery to warmth and comfort.

“In a few moments the housewife had brought in a hot bath for my frozen feet, and the husband a supplement in the way of a hot drink. The generous hospitality restored, in a very short time, my almost perished frame. They were both strangers, but the closest friends could not have treated me more kindly. I remained for dinner, and, as the weather had become clear, we proceeded on our journey. The next morning being Sunday, I celebrated mass in Dr. Monk’s house, and preached there later in the day to an earnest audience. The religious interest was profound. It promised to become, as it truly did, a movement of the whole district toward the Catholic Church.

“Regular appointments were made for a visit by the priest, and in a short time the brother of Dr. Monk, with his family, embraced the Catholic faith. The congregations that met on the occasions of the priest’s visits to Newton Grove were so large that it became necessary to erect a temporary structure of rough boards for their accommodation.* This tabernacle answered admirably for the services, which were arranged to suit the primitive state of affairs in that section. The priest appeared on the rostrum in his secular dress, and, after prayer and reading of the Scriptures, delivered a long instruction on the Catholic Church or some one of its doctrines. The preaching, directed at the conversion of the people, was necessarily simple in its character, historical and didactic. Catechisms and books of instruction were freely distributed after the sermons. An attractive feature of these services was the singing, by select voices, of beautiful hymns.

* The number soon grew to three hundred.



"The Catholic movement daily gathered strength by the accession of many of the most respectable families in the vicinity. Within a short time the number of conversions warranted the erection of a church and schoolhouse. On their completion, this apostolic mission became firmly established and continues to prosper."

Another church sprang from a visit by a priest to three Irish brothers, peddlers, who had settled 80 miles from a church. Their families were baptized, and conversions among the country folk multiplied. In a short time a flourishing parish was established.

A missionary found at Chinquepin, a village far in the recesses of the North Carolina pines, an old Irish woman who had not seen a priest in 45 years. She said her faith was still as fresh as her native sod, and that she had never omitted her prayers. A congregation of converts was founded, for whom a chapel and school were subsequently erected.

On his mission journeys remote from railways, the Bishop used to ride in a dilapidated wagon drawn by two horses. A young priest, or sometimes a negro driver, accompanied him. The vehicle carried packages of clothing, flour and medicines for the poor; clerical robes, mission literature, and food for the wayfarers, for often they ate their noonday meal under a great tree, far from a habitation. This old wagon finally became so unsafe that the Bishop's friends were afraid it would break down and leave him stranded in the wilderness. They repeatedly offered to buy him a carriage, but he always replied that he thought the wagon might last a little longer. "Friends," he used to say, "you can give me the money, if you will, for the Church needs it, but not for any vehicle for my own use."

Priests were so rare in North Carolina in those days that they sometimes had difficulty in proving their identity. While Father O'Connell was traveling near Asheville, worn out by a long journey, he arrived at the house of a Catholic family and



presented himself. The woman of the house had been imposed upon by a pretended clergyman some time before, and refused to believe Father O'Connell. He showed her his missal, vestments and breviary, which he carried in a valise, but she was still unconvinced. In despair, the tired priest gave up the attempt and turned, heartsick, from the door. Seeking spiritual comfort, he sat down beside a fence and began saying his beads. The woman opened the door, saw him at his devotions and was convinced at last. "Now," she said, "I know you are a holy man of God. I could be deceived about other things, but not those beads!" She welcomed warmly to her home the stranger whom she had so lately rejected.

In making a visit to an outlying community with Father Northrop, the man whose guest the bishop was to be drove up in a carriage, sitting bolt upright with singular fixity and holding the reins tightly. As he approached, it became evident that he was intoxicated and was trying to discharge his function as driver without betraying himself. The bishop began a severe reprimand, saying that it was the first time in many years that a bishop had visited the locality, and it was incumbent upon him to conduct himself properly on such an occasion.

"Your Grace," was the ardent reply, "I felt so overjoyed that I just could not help getting tipsy!"

Making the best of circumstances, the Bishop and Father Northrop entered the carriage, and each took a position on one side of their host, holding him erect by their combined efforts while he drove them to their destination.

At New Bern the Bishop had some copies of a circular printed, prescribing the manner in which worship might be held on Sunday where there was no priest. The faithful were to assemble at a designated place, and one of them was to read the prayers for mass, after which a portion was to be read from one of the Catholic books appointed for such occasions. The children and others in need of catechetical instruction



were then to be arranged in classes and taught prayers and Christian doctrine.

Leaving New Bern, the Bishop stopped at Swift Creek, where he confirmed Mr. and Mrs. Nelson in the garret, "the only unoccupied place at our disposal." After a short visit to the town of Washington, where he "said mass in Dr. Gallagher's house," he proceeded to Plymouth. There he was hospitably received by Captain McNamara, who had saved the Church at New Bern from being turned into a carpet-bag school. Driving five miles from that town, he baptized and confirmed Mr. Isaac Swift, who had been a rich planter, but was greatly reduced in fortune. "I started to pursue the journey 12 miles further, for the purpose of visiting a Catholic family," the Bishop wrote, "but the vehicle broke down and we were obliged to return."

At Edenton he was able to say mass in "the finest Catholic Church in the State"—St. Ann's. He preached there to a large congregation, composed chiefly of Protestants. No wonder! The Catholics of Edenton and vicinity then numbered eighteen, about half of whom were converts. They were anxious to have a resident priest, who might also attend the near-by missions, and Bishop Gibbons expressed the hope "that Providence will soon enable me to gratify their wishes."

He preached in the courthouse at Tarboro, and noted that "the most intelligent citizens of the town were present, including three judges." At Wilson, the next stop, he also preached in the courthouse, and found that many Protestants had promised to subscribe for the erection of a Catholic Church.

Arriving at Raleigh, he was entertained at the handsome residence of William Grimes. The Legislature was in session, and many of its members went to hear him preach in St. John's Church.

He returned to Wilmington December 17, after a trip of four weeks, the results of which he summarized as follows:

"Number of miles traveled by rail, stage and steamboat, 925.

"Number of towns and stations visited, 16.

"Number of Catholics in various places, 400.

"Converts confirmed, 16; total number, 64.

"Converts baptized, 10; total number, 16."

The need of money to carry on the work was pressing. In the same month he received a draft for 1,600 francs from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a total of 8,000 francs having been allotted to his vicariate for 1868.

In preparing his Lenten regulations for 1869, the Bishop wrote that they were about the same as in the Diocese of Baltimore, except that "milk is allowed in this vicariate, owing to the scarcity of tea and coffee in certain sections of the State."

Having received a circular asking a small subscription in behalf of the American College at Rome, he replied that "the impoverished condition of the State and the smallness of the Catholic population" made it impossible to contribute.

He installed Rev. J. V. McNamara as pastor of the Church in Raleigh, July 11. The Governor, Chief Justice, several of the associate judges and many prominent citizens were present. By this time there were 100 Catholics at the State capital.

At Charlotte, where he arrived July 16, he confirmed 43 persons and baptized Mrs. Mary E. Butler, wife of John T. Butler, his host during his stay in Charlotte, having received her profession of faith. A short time later he dedicated St. James' Church, at Concord, whose congregation, consisting of 60 persons, were all converts, with one exception.

He found three Catholics on a visit to Morgantown, one of whom, Mr. McGraw, had ten children, all Protestants, having been reared in the faith of their mother. From that place he traveled 26 miles, over a beautiful mountain country, to

Moore's, in McDowell county. On August 8 he observed the total eclipse of the sun from the Blue Ridge.

He traveled 24 miles on horseback, August 9, and arrived at Asheville, where he preached in the courthouse and bought a lot for a church.

The Bishop set out in November, 1870, for a second trip over the eastern part of the State, visiting many towns. Conversions were still numerous. At Plymouth he found that a certain Irish Catholic had been induced to join the Baptists. Immersed, the convert was invited to say prayer. He gave out "Hail, Holy Queen." The astonishment of the audience was immense. The convert afterward returned to the Catholic Church.

In August, 1871, the bishop started on a visitation to the western part of the State. From the town of Company Shops to Greensboro he was conveyed on a freight engine. At Gaston he found a congregation of 80, where there had been but 36 on his first visit, two years before. At Lincolnton he preached to a large audience in the courthouse, the people being, no doubt, moved by some curiosity to see the first bishop who was ever present in that town. He found that a handsome church had been erected by this time at Asheville, which he dedicated September 24, preaching on "Charity."

Bishop Gibbons recognized early that schools were one of the greatest necessities of the stricken South and a potent means of propagating religion. "We can testify," wrote Father Gross, "to his self-sacrificing zeal for the establishment of Catholic schools throughout the vicariate, under stress of direst poverty and the most adverse surroundings. To this end he not only sacrificed money, and time, and labor in begging money, but descended to teach himself daily a class in the parochial school, to help and encourage the priests whose services, for the want of lay teachers, had to be gratuitously engaged."*

* Rev. Mark S. Gross, in the *Carmelite Review*, May, 1895.

In 1869 the Bishop brought to Wilmington a colony of Sisters of Mercy from the mother house in Charleston and established them in one of the old-fashioned Southern homes, called the Peyton mansion, which he bought for \$16,000—a fortune in Carolina in those days. The people wondered whence the money had come. But a small part of it had been raised in the vicariate, the Bishop having obtained most of the sum through several visits to the Northern States. More than \$5,000 was collected in Albany alone. The sisters founded schools at Charlotte and Hickory, as well as at Wilmington.

One of the most enduring works of the Bishop's administration was the establishment of Mary Help Abbey by the Benedictine Order at Belmont, near Charlotte. For this purpose Rev. J. J. O'Connell gave his estate of 500 acres, to which he had returned after the war, and whence he attended the neighboring missions. Arch Abbot Wimmer, of St. Vincent's Abbey, Pennsylvania, was applied to for a colony for the vicariate. The devoted Abbot received at the same time a similar petition from a far more favorable diocese, but he chose North Carolina, and Rev. Herman Wolf, formerly a Lutheran minister, was sent there as prior.

The first shelter for the fathers was a frame tavern a hundred years old, of Revolutionary celebrity. For a time the outlook was so discouraging that the abandonment of the priory was debated in the chapter of the abbey in Pennsylvania. At this critical period a number of young Benedictines volunteered to go to Belmont if allowed to take with them an abbot of their own selection. This offer was accepted, and they chose Rev. Leo Haid to lead them in the undertaking. With his administration a new era began. Handsome and ample buildings were erected, and St. Mary's College was launched as one of the successful educational institutions of the South, a training school for a native Southern clergy, so much needed in the aggressive work of the Church.

It was difficult to get priests to keep up with the progress of the work in North Carolina. Their task was full of obstacles and they were altogether unsalaried. But the spiritual rewards which they won cheered them on, and, as the success of their labors became known in other dioceses, outside help was less difficult for Bishop Gibbons to obtain.

His experiences in North Carolina, coming as they did at a comparatively impressionable period of his life, exercised a great influence over him. Previous to that time his lot had been the ordinary one of a priest, schooled in the repressive discipline of the seminary, and then thrown out into the active and arduous labor of a parish, with little time to come in contact with the world, except as represented by his own flock. In North Carolina he was suddenly thrust into a different atmosphere. The people were not only nearly all Protestants, but tens of thousands of them had no conception of what the Catholic Church was or what it represented.

From the beginning his mission was, first, to calm antagonistic opinion, and then to lay a foundation for the spread of his faith. His work, being so largely among Protestants, gave him a far better comprehension than the average priest receives of what they stand for in matters of religion and their sincerity of view. By force of circumstances, he had to concede to them desire equal to his own for the truths of Christian faith. He was not less a Catholic when he left Carolina than when he went there. In fact, it seems that the foundations of his belief had been strengthened by opposition; but he had acquired a broad charity, a wide horizon of view, from which he never separated himself in later life, and which stamped him as a friend of men of other creeds. Impressions gained in country towns and secluded rural homes were felt later in the Vatican itself.

CHAPTER V.

AT THE VATICAN COUNCIL OF 1870.

It was but a step for this man of destiny in the Church from his pioneer work in the North Carolina forests to the august assemblage of the Vatican Council of 1870. He had served his vicariate scarcely more than a year, when that memorable gathering, the first general council of the Church since Trent, 300 years before, convened. When the bishops sat at Trent, America had been discovered but a short time, and not all of them were sure that it was not a part of the Indies. So secure was the papacy in its political power over a great part of the civilized world, that Alexander VI had but recently issued his bull of demarcation giving to Portugal all of the newly discovered lands east of a line 100 leagues west of the Azores, and to Spain all to the westward.

America had no episcopate, and only a few adventurous priests had gone forth as messengers of the faith to the unknown peoples spread over its vast area. Now it was the home of many millions of Catholics, and the pontiffs were beginning to see in its future the Church's brightest hope for the expansion of her spiritual influence. From Canada to Patagonia the bishops were called to Rome to deliberate, in the providence of God, upon the welfare of the souls of men; and the American element constituted a force unknown in the previous councils which had declared the judgment of the Church.

While the problems which led Pius IX to summon the council were chiefly of European origin, they were not confined to the Eastern Hemisphere. Wars had been flaming upon every hand, and the campaigns of Garibaldi had been

carried almost to the doors of the Vatican. The Crimea had reeked with Russian, French and English blood. Austria had been humbled at Sadowa. In the United States the great Civil War was raging when Pius took the first steps toward convoking the council. The independence of the papacy itself was threatened, and none knew when there might be another Avignon. Troops of Napoleon III had been supporting the Pope in the midst of Italian hostility. Catholics throughout the world had become impatient to the bursting point from the continual restraints exercised upon the papacy. In their minds, from long habit, they associated its spiritual independence with the temporal power; and the prospects of the loss of this filled the bishops with alarm. Many could not, from the nature of things, conceive the possibility of a pontiff shorn of political power, yet able to exercise, despite all obstacles, the spiritual oversight of Catholics throughout the world and aggressively to press forward in the propagation of the faith.

Of 36 crowned heads, 24 were Protestant, and in almost every country there was a powerful current of public opinion in favor of the separation of church and state. Perhaps even more was to be feared from Catholic than non-Catholic sovereigns. Regalism—the interference of Catholic monarchs in the purely internal affairs of the Church—had grown to be an almost insupportable burden. Political meddling hampered the pontificate in the selection of bishops; and priests were interfered with almost at the steps of the altar. Private ambition and intrigue interwove every step in the adjustment of the direct relations between church and state. Ecclesiastical seminaries, basking in the favor of powerful rulers, taught what Rome called heresy.

In the first era of the Church, kings and nations had been gradually brought in harmony with the papacy, until the real union of Christendom had become a fact; but in the 300 years following the Council of Trent there had been a steady centrifugal force to which the constitution of the Church had

never adapted itself. Many of the decrees of Trent related to conditions which had disappeared; others needed radical modification. Pope Pius was inclined to consider that the time was ripe for convoking the council as an "extraordinary remedy for the extraordinary evils of the Christian world."*

Nearly all the cardinals whom Pius consulted in December, 1864, when he first announced that he had been deliberating regarding an ecumenical council, strongly advised that it be convoked. They declared it to be their opinion that the special character of the age was a tendency to overthrow the ancient Christian institutions, founded on a supernatural principle, and to erect a new order, based on natural reason alone. They ascribed this tendency to two errors—first, that society as such had no duties toward God, religion being considered to be for individual conscience only; second, that human reason was sufficient to guide man to a higher knowledge and destiny apart from the organization of the Church.

They pointed to the revolt from the authority of revelation and the growth of naturalism, rationalism, pantheism, socialism and communism. Liberalism, leading to the declaration of the supremacy of the state rather than the church over education, marriage and consecrated property and to abridgment of the temporal power of the head of the Church, was set forth as the practical result of these tendencies. The cardinals dwelt on the need of amending the discipline of the Church, untouched for 300 years; of better provision for the education of the clergy and the government of monastic orders, and of bringing the laity to a more general obedience to ecclesiastical laws, almost ignored in some countries. From these general sources many specific developments were cited, such as laxity in the observance of the marriage tie, mixed marriages, secret societies, the haste to get rich by questionable methods, non-uniformity in the observance of feasts and fasts. An ardent desire was expressed by the consultors for the reunion of

* Manning, True Story of the Vatican Council.

Protestants in the fold of the Catholic Church; and it was hoped that the acts of the council would open a way for this great undertaking.

Only two of the cardinals spoke of papal infallibility, which was destined to be the overshadowing question for the council. A few alluded to the preservation of the temporal power. By far the largest number of replies dealt with subjects embraced in the supernatural character of religion and the eternal destiny of man, leaving material topics out of consideration as worthy to be discussed, if at all, in the light of the spiritual progress of the world.

Pius deliberated long before finally deciding to convoke the council. The bull of indiction was dated June 29, 1868, and the tremendous work of preparing in detail for the labors of the gathering began.

In October, 1869, Bishop Gibbons sailed from Baltimore in the company of Archbishop Spalding and other American prelates.* Landing at Southampton, he proceeded by easy stages through France to Italy. What emotions swept his imagination as he beheld for the first time the Eternal City, the chosen seat of the successors of Peter! The ardor of youth, as well as the impulses of piety, must have tinged his view as he gazed on the storied Vatican, in whose basilica he was soon to sit with the fathers of the Church from every quarter of the world. He was the youngest bishop in that gathering of more than 700. "My youth and inexperience," he wrote, "imposed upon me a discreet silence among my elders. I do not remember to have missed a single session, and was an attentive listener at all debates."†

The American and English bishops had, perhaps, a greater stake in the decision of the question of papal infallibility than any others. It had been accepted as a doctrine of the Church

* *Catholic Mirror*, October 23, 1869.

† Personal Reminiscences of the Vatican Council, Cardinal Gibbons in the *North American Review* for April, 1894.

so long in continental Europe that the opposition to it which might arise there would subside, in all probability, as the true meaning of the definition was comprehended. In England, from the time of Henry VIII, this had been a subject which had aroused Protestants to defiant denial. Sovereigns, in their coronation oaths at Westminster, had abjured it as a heresy. In America the problem was to win non-Catholics to the Church, as well as to hold the allegiance of the faithful; and this could only be done in the clear light of public opinion. The chief obstacle to the spread of the Catholic Church on this side of the Atlantic had been the impression that it was subject to foreign control. Enlightened Americans of Protestant ancestry could not wholly reconcile themselves to papal supremacy of a universal church; and the spread-eagle type of patriotism was moved to explosion at the very thought of it.

The American bishops did not question the truth of the doctrine of infallibility; they unalterably adhered to it in both belief and practice. Some of them could see, however, no use in defining it at that time, and were strongly of the opinion that it would raise another cloud between them and the Protestants when their Church was at last piercing the mists of misrepresentation which had darkened her path so long. The doctrine sought to be defined with the weight of a general council was that the pontiff, when speaking *ex cathedra*, in the exercise of his office as the shepherd of all Christians, and declaring a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, was infallible. This was very different from a declaration of personal infallibility on all subjects, but it would be hard to get non-Catholics to understand it. To say that it had been held before and was merely the definition of a dogma containing nothing new might complicate the situation by raising added doubts.

When Bishop Gibbons arrived in Rome it did not appear that the question of infallibility was likely to come before the council. Anti-Catholic papers, it is true, had been filled with

rumors that a Jesuitical conspiracy was on foot to clothe the Pope with this attribute. The *schemata*, or list of topics to be treated by the council, had been prepared by a Commission of Direction, composed of five cardinals, an archbishop and eight bishops, with 102 consultors, of whom 10 were bishops, 69 secular priests and 23 regulars. When the commission, in preparing the outline on the subject of the Roman pontiff and his temporal power, came to discuss infallibility, two questions were raised. The first was, "Whether the infallibility of the Roman pontiff *can* be defined as an article of faith;" the second, "Whether it *ought* to be defined as an article of faith."* The commission voted affirmatively, with unanimous voice, in reply to the first question; concerning the second, all but one agreed in the view that the subject ought not to be proposed in the council unless it should be demanded by the bishops. The subject was thus, for the time being, set aside.

Notwithstanding the action of the Commission of Direction, a majority of the American bishops saw, with dismay, a rapidly growing sentiment in favor of bringing the question before the council. This might be done by a petition to the Commission of Postulates or Propositions, which could introduce new subjects into the *schemata*. In a short time 450 of the 700 prelates had actually signed such a petition. About a hundred, including many of the Americans, signed a counter petition; but it became clearly evident that it was more difficult to marshal influence on that side of the question. The Americans held a consultation at their college in Rome, and a large majority declared that it would be inexpedient to bring up the question.

Bishop Gibbons, on account of his youth, did not feel justified in expressing any opinion. Not five bishops in the whole council, said Cardinal Manning, could be justly thought to have opposed the truth of the doctrine.

* Manning, True Story of the Vatican Council, p. 82 *et seq.*

The council lasted from December 8, 1869, to July 18, 1870. In March the question of infallibility was formally presented. On the first vote 451 recorded themselves in favor of the decree, 88 against it, and 62 gave a conditional assent. The stage of argument, learned, logical and profound, was soon reached. It may be well to pause here for a brief survey of the reasons for and against the decree, as stated by the Archbishop of Florence, to whom Pius IX gave a commission to write the history of the council.

On the negative side it was held that as the whole episcopate and priesthood and the faithful, with few exceptions, had received with veneration and docility the doctrinal decisions of the pontiffs, no necessity for such a definition existed. In order to define the question of infallibility with exactness, it would be necessary to prescribe the form and manner in which infallibility was to be exercised. This would be difficult, and would involve the Holy See in complications. The hope of reuniting the Eastern churches and of the return of Protestants to the fold would be weakened. Dissensions might be produced among Catholics themselves.

"Let that suffice which has already been declared and has been believed by all," wrote a learned theologian of the opposition, "that the Church, whether congregated in council or dispersed throughout the world, is always infallible, and the Supreme Pontiff, according to the words of the Council of Florence, is the teacher of the whole Church and of all Christians. But as to the mysterious gift of infallibility which, by God, is bestowed upon the episcopate united to the Pope, and at the same time is bestowed in a special manner on the Supreme Pontiff, it may be left as it is. The Church, as all Catholics believe, whether in an ecumenical council or by the Pope alone without a council, guards and explains the truth of revelation. It is not expedient or opportune to make further declarations, unless a proved necessity demands it, which necessity at present does not appear to exist."

This about stated the case for the Americans. Their objections might be summed up in a sentence—the fear that their propaganda among non-Catholics would be hindered and that public opinion might revert to the conditions of “Knownothing” times.

Weighty and pious arguments were presented on the other side by devoted fathers of the Church. They held that such a definition would be opportune, because the doctrine was true; for, if true, how could it be said to be inopportune? Has not God revealed it, they asked, and can it be permitted us to think that what He has thought it opportune to reveal, it is not opportune for us to declare? In the minds of objectors, “opportune” must refer to something of a political or diplomatic character, some calculation of expediency relating to peoples or governments. This caution would be proper for legislatures or cabinets debating public questions of a secular nature; but the Church deals with the truths of revelation, and it is at all times opportune for her to declare what God has willed that man should know. It had been said that many revealed truths were not defined. This was true, and would be a strong argument if the truth had never been denied. The infallibility of the Roman Pontiff having been denied, its definition became necessary. Some persons, in order to throw doubt on the doctrine, or to prove it false, represented the denial of it to be ancient and widespread. This increased the need of declaring it by an authoritative decree. Protestants would say: “If you are not doubtful, why do you hesitate to declare it?” Antagonists hoped to find a division among Catholics in order to gain leverage for an opinion that the Church was not really united and, therefore, not the authoritative custodian of the deposit of Divine truth. All Catholics believed that the Church, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, is infallible. If it were left open to doubt whether the teaching of the head of the Church were true, those who believed that he might err could always contradict his teaching. A fallible head to an

infallible body would be contrary to the logic of common sense. The Church during eighteen centuries had done many acts of supreme importance by its head alone. Were these acts fallible or infallible? The question had been formally raised, and, for the sake of Divine truth, it was contended, must be as formally solved.

To the petition of the bishops, addressed to the Commission of Postulates or Propositions, was added an appendix, containing reasons for their view and a citation from the authorities of provincial councils in support of it. Among these was an extract from the declarations of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, of which Bishop Gibbons had been assistant chancellor, and which it was hoped would have weight with the American prelates assembled at the Vatican. This declaration was :

"The living and infallible authority flourishes in that Church alone which was built by Christ upon Peter, who is the head, leader and pastor of the whole Church, whose faith Christ promised should never fail; which ever had legitimate pontiffs, dating their origin in unbroken line from Peter himself, being seated in his chair and being the inheritors and defenders of the like doctrine, dignity, office and power. And because where Peter is, there also is the Church, and because Peter speaks in the person of the Roman Pontiff, ever lives in his successors, passes judgment and makes known the truths of faith to those who seek them, therefore, are the Divine declarations to be received in the manner in which they have been and are held by this Roman See of Blessed Peter, that mother and teacher of all churches, which has ever preserved whole the teachings delivered by Christ, and which has taught the faithful, showing to all men the paths of salvation and the doctrine of everlasting truth."*

The declaration by the Council of Florence in 1439 was the favorite citation of those who urged that a definition be pro-

* *Acta et Decreta*, Conc. Plen. II, Baltimore.

mulgated. It was that "the Roman Pontiff is the true vicar of Christ and head of the whole church and is the father and teacher of all Christians; and to him in blessed Peter the full power was given by our Lord of feeding, ruling and governing the universal Church."

Nearly five hundred of the bishops, assembled in Rome in 1867 to observe the centenary of the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul, had addressed Pius IX in the following terms: "Believing that Peter has spoken by the mouth of Pius, whatever has been said, confirmed and decreed by you to preserve the deposit of faith, we also repeat, confirm and profess, and with one mind and heart we reject all that you have judged it necessary to reprove and condemn as contrary to Divine faith, to the salvation of souls and to the good of society. For what the fathers of Florence defined in their Decree of Union is firmly and deeply impressed on our minds—that the Roman Pontiff is the vicar of Christ, the head of the whole Church, the father and teacher of all Christians."

None claimed personal infallibility for the pontiff. In order to exclude the possibility of this interpretation, the title of the Vatican Council's decree was changed from "*De Romani Pontificis Infallibilitate*" (on the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff) to "*De Romani Pontificis Infallibili Magisterio*" (on the infallible teaching office of the Roman Pontiff). The *magisterium* or teaching office of the primacy was the doctrinal authority of the supreme ruler and teacher. It was held to be a Divine assistance inseparable from the office and not a quality inherent in the person of the Pope.

The chapter on papal infallibility came to a vote in the council in July. On the first vote 451 of the fathers answered *placet*, or aye, 88 *non placet*, or no, and 62 *placet juxta modum*, or aye, with modifications. Nearly two hundred amendments, some of which were adopted, were offered. When the time came for the final action in public session, 533 voted *placet*, and only 2 *non placet*; 55 absented themselves, in order to

avoid being recorded on the negative side of a question whose decision they considered inopportune; 11 others were absent for unknown causes, and were supposed to have left Rome, as permission had been given several days before to begin the journey homeward. The two who voted *non placet* were Bishop Fitzgerald, of Little Rock, Ark., and the Bishop of the Italian Diocese of Caiazzo. They at once made their submission and subscribed to the decree.

Bishop Gibbons voted *placet* on the question on both occasions when it came before the council. As we have seen, his judgment was that the time for the definition was not opportune; but, seeing the irresistible drift of opinion among the fathers of the Church, he could not cast his vote against a doctrine which agreed with his own belief and practice.

So much doubt has been thrown upon the meaning of the declaration of infallibility that it may be well to quote its language. It read as follows:

"Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of Christian faith, for the glory of God our Savior, the exaltation of the Catholic religion and the salvation of the Christian people, the sacred council approving, we teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: That the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*—that is, when in the discharge of the office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church—is, by the Divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that the Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith and morals; and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves and not from the consent of the Church."

Of the monumental work of the council in dealing with the doctrinal, disciplinary and social problems which had arisen since Trent, nothing need be said here. In all questions except that of infallibility there was no sharp line of difference between a majority of the Americans and the other fathers who sat in the Vatican. It was the one declaration of the gathering which profoundly stirred the external world.

Contrary to expectation, this was less acutely evident in America than in Europe. Here there were no political bonds between church and state which might be unloosed by a declaration in Rome or anywhere else. No officeholder or politician in America had the vestige of authority to meddle in doctrinal definitions which in no way affected the civil government. There was no concordat to be debated in Congress.

The Franco-Prussian War broke out while the council was in session. In a short time Bismarck and Von Moltke had crushed the power of Napoleon III. French troops having been withdrawn from Rome, the city was seized by Victor Emmanuel and Pius IX was deprived of the last remnant of that temporal power which had endured since the time of Charlemagne. It is clearly evident that in the whole of Europe a gradual weakening of the pontiff's potency in political affairs has taken place. In America it is perhaps true that the spread of the Catholic faith was arrested for a time; but its marvelous development in the closing years of the nineteenth century is complete evidence that the declaration of papal infallibility was not a permanent obstacle to the increase of spiritual results west of the Atlantic. Aggressive anti-Catholicism has flared up once or twice, but has found its strongest enemy in enlightened public opinion. The liberality of the young vicar of North Carolina who sat in the Vatican Council has been one of the most powerful factors in this state of things.

Bishop Gibbons, at thirty-six, was naturally impressed in an extraordinary manner by the scenes through which he passed. He had been ordained but nine years before, and life was still fresh to him when he was projected in the midst of the wisdom and grandeur and solemnity of the greatest organization of the modern world. His own country and its political organization had not a hundred years of independence behind it; in Rome he sat in an assembly whose deliberations represented the accumulated experience and weight of an institution whose roots were planted in the beginnings of Christianity, and whose

development had employed a large proportion of the master minds of the world, from St. Peter to Constantine, and down through the ages. He was the youngest bishop; many prelates of venerable years sat on an equality beside him. He met for the first time Cardinal Manning, who was destined to have a great influence on his life; and he was impressed at the outset by the brilliant Archbishop of Westminster perhaps more than by any other man he met. Manning delivered the longest oration of the council, which lasted hardly more than an hour. His emaciated form and incessant activity moved Archbishop Spalding to say to him: "I know not how you can work so much, for you neither eat, nor drink nor sleep."*

Of the American prelates, Archbishops Spalding and Kenrick were among the most influential. Bishop Gibbons was surprised at the memory of Kenrick, who reclined in his seat, with half-closed eyes, listening to the debates, taking no notes, and yet, when he came to speak, reviewed with remarkable accuracy what had been said by others. Archbishop McCloskey, of New York, destined to become, five years later, the first American Cardinal, was a "silent Solon;" Archbishop Leahy, of Cashel, had in an eminent degree the gifts of the Irish orator, recalling in his eloquent Latin the glories of the Schoolmen. He could flavor judgment with wit in the tongue of the Cæsars. Archbishop Darboy, of Paris, who shared the confidence and expressed the views of Napoleon III, made a deep impression. He had seen the assassination of two of his predecessors—Archbishops Affre and Sibour; and in less than a year after the council adjourned was himself shot to death in the prison of La Roquette amid the ravings of the Commune.

Bishop Dupanloup, of Orleans, was one of the Forty Immortals of the French Academy and the counsellor of Prince Talleyrand, whom he reconciled to the Church after a long estrangement. Cardinal Dechamps, Archbishop of Malines,

* Personal Reminiscences of the Vatican Council, Cardinal Gibbons in the *North American Review*, April, 1894.

was primate of Belgium, and his brother Adolphus was Prime Minister of that Kingdom. Baron Von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz, was disfigured by a scar on the face received in a duel of student days at Goettingen. Bishop Gibbons saw the democracy of the Church strikingly exemplified in Cardinal Prince Schwarzenberg, primate of Bohemia, and Cardinal Simor, primate of Hungary, the two most influential churchmen of the Austrian Empire. Schwarzenberg, a handsome man, of commanding presence, was a prince of the realm as well as of the Church. Simor sprang from the people, and was proud of declaring it. Bishop Strossmayer, of Bosnia, was reputed the most eloquent prelate in the council. "His periods," wrote Bishop Gibbons, "flamed with the grace and majesty and musical rhythm of Cicero."

Cardinal Pecci, afterward Leo XIII, the most powerful friend of Bishop Gibbons in the career that was opening before him, said little in debate, but was potent and indefatigable in council. The young American prelate thought he could see a design of Providence in the fact that the man who was to rule the whole Church should not have been involved in the disputes of the council. Cardinal Pecci's learning and administrative experience were invaluable in the vital work of the gathering.

Every bishop knew at least two or three languages; some spoke ten or twelve. Cardinal Simor told Bishop Gibbons that he employed four different tongues in the government of his diocese—Latin, German, Hungarian and Slavonian. Next to the young American prelate sat a vicar apostolic from China, who used six dialects in his vicariate. A bishop of a Chinese diocese had traveled twenty-three thousand miles to attend the council. One or two blind bishops had to be guided by servants as they took their places in the assemblage. Some of the feeblest were so exhausted by their travels that they died in Rome or on the way, martyrs to their obedience to duty.

At Trent only four English-speaking prelates sat; at the Vatican Council there were more than one hundred and twenty. Bishop Gibbons ventured to express the opinion that if the next ecumenical council should be held in fifty years, "the representatives of the English language would equal in numbers, if not surpass, those of any other tongue." He agreed with Cardinal Manning that "the number of prelates who questioned the claim of papal infallibility could be counted on the fingers of one hand." "Yet," Bishop Gibbons added, "many of the speakers, indeed, impugned the dogma, not because they did not personally accept it, but with the view of pointing out the difficulties with which the teaching body of the Church would have to contend in vindicating it before the world. I have listened in the council chamber to far more subtle, more plausible and more searching objections to this prerogative of the Pope than I have read or heard from the pen or tongue of the most learned or formidable Protestant assailant. But all the objections were triumphantly answered. Every dispassionate reader, whatever may be his religious convictions, must be profoundly impressed, as I was at the time, with the fearless and serene conduct of the great majority, who, spurning a temporizing policy or the dictates of human prudence, were deterred neither by specious arguments, nor imperial threats, nor by the fear of schism, from promulgating what they conceived to be a truth contained in the deposit of Divine revelation. Since the last vote taken in the solemn session of July 18, 1870, all the bishops of Christendom, without a murmur of dissent, have accepted the decision as final and irrevocable."

Such was the Vatican Council, a product of the thought, the labor, the spiritual inspiration of three hundred years. Father Hecker, who expressed the general view of American Catholics, considered that it meant a new era, especially for the United States, the tendency of whose free institutions, he declared, was to make men Catholics. The constitution of the Church having been fixed in permanent form and the capstone

applied by the definition of papal infallibility, he held that in the wide radius left for liberty of thought and action the fullest development of the individual should be sought.

From his experience in the Olympian atmosphere of the Church, Bishop Gibbons returned to his task in North Carolina with a new light on the world-wide mission of the Catholic faith, which was to guide his footsteps along many a difficult path that would open before him.

CHAPTER VI.

BISHOP OF RICHMOND.

Bishop Gibbons had labored in North Carolina a little less than four years, when a new field opened for his versatile activity. This was the See of Richmond, Va., in which a vacancy was created by the death in January, 1872, of the beloved Bishop John McGill, who had guided the affairs of that diocese 22 years. The Vicar of North Carolina was now recognized on all sides as a coming man in the Church. His superiors in the hierarchy were glad to acknowledge his talents, and his brother bishops were ready to acclaim any promotion that might come to him. He was no less popular among the clergy, on account of his charming personal traits. Always ready to help a priest, as well as a layman, he could listen well as they told their difficulties, and, if occasion demanded, could administer effective correction in a manner which the recipient would have difficulty in distinguishing from praise.

Human nature seemed almost an open book to him, as to many other men who combine in themselves the elements of success. He could often form an instantaneous and accurate judgment of a man whom he met for the first time, and his almost instinctive trait of justice enabled him to modify it readily, as circumstances might require. His was a strong character, which was bound to dominate in the end, but a conciliatory one. Few could attain with greater ease a purpose in the face of obstacles. Those who were thrown in contact with him, in and out of the Church, formed the habit of following where he led; it seemed the natural order.

At first Bishop Gibbons was appointed administrator of the Richmond diocese, in addition to the duties of his vicariate, while time might be afforded for the prescribed procedure of

FRIENDSHIP WITH ARCHBISHOP BAYLEY. 63

the Church in the selection of a permanent successor to Mgr. McGill. The final choice of Rome fell on him, and it was decided that he should continue as administrator of North Carolina at the same time. The situation of Richmond was favorable to the management of both jurisdictions, and the energy and resourcefulness of Bishop Gibbons might be expected to be equal to the double task.

Here began the close interweaving of his life with that of another man who was to exert a marked influence on it. This was James Roosevelt Bayley, one of the most interesting figures whose impress has been left on the Catholic Church in America. Bayley was a near connection of the Roosevelt family of New York, from which an American President afterward sprang. He was a grandson of Dr. Richard Bayley, a celebrated anatomist and a pioneer of American medicine. Born to luxury and culture, he was a society man in New York in his younger days. His family were of the Protestant Episcopal faith, and, his thoughts turning to the ministry, he was ordained in that church, serving as rector of an influential congregation in Harlem. In time he became a Catholic and studied at the Seminary of St. Sulpice, in Paris. Archbishop Hughes, afterward famous as the head of the See of New York during the Civil War, ordained him. On account of his ripe scholarship, he was made president of St. John's College, Fordham, N. Y. His contributions to literature were considerable. He was serving as Bishop of Newark, when a warm friendship sprang up between him and Archbishop Spalding, who looked upon him as his successor. Several months before Archbishop Spalding's death, it is related, he put his pectoral chain and cross around Bishop Bayley's neck and said: "One day this will be yours."*

Bishop Bayley did not want to come to Baltimore, saying: "I am too old a tree to be transplanted." He refused to accept

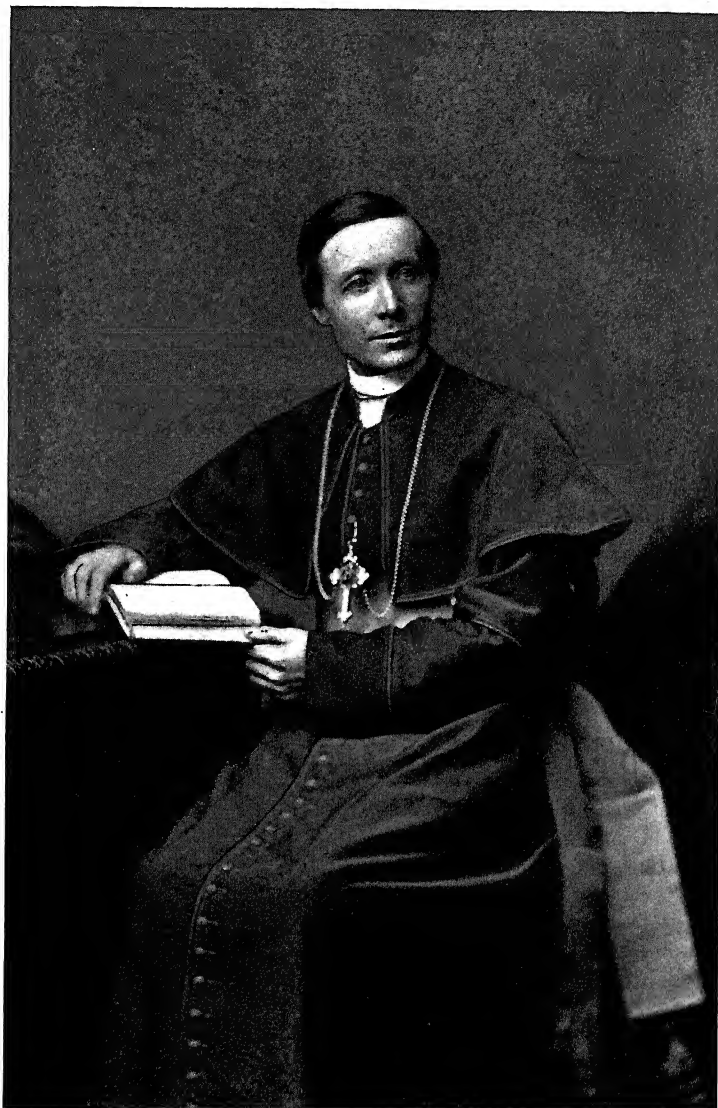
* Riordan, Cathedral Records, p. 85.

the idea of the change until the papal decree had been issued. Archbishop Spalding died in February, 1872, and on October 13 Bishop Bayley was invested with the pallium in the Baltimore Cathedral, Bishop Gibbons taking part in the ceremony. The next Sunday the new Archbishop installed Bishop Gibbons in St. Peter's Cathedral, Richmond, as the head of that diocese.

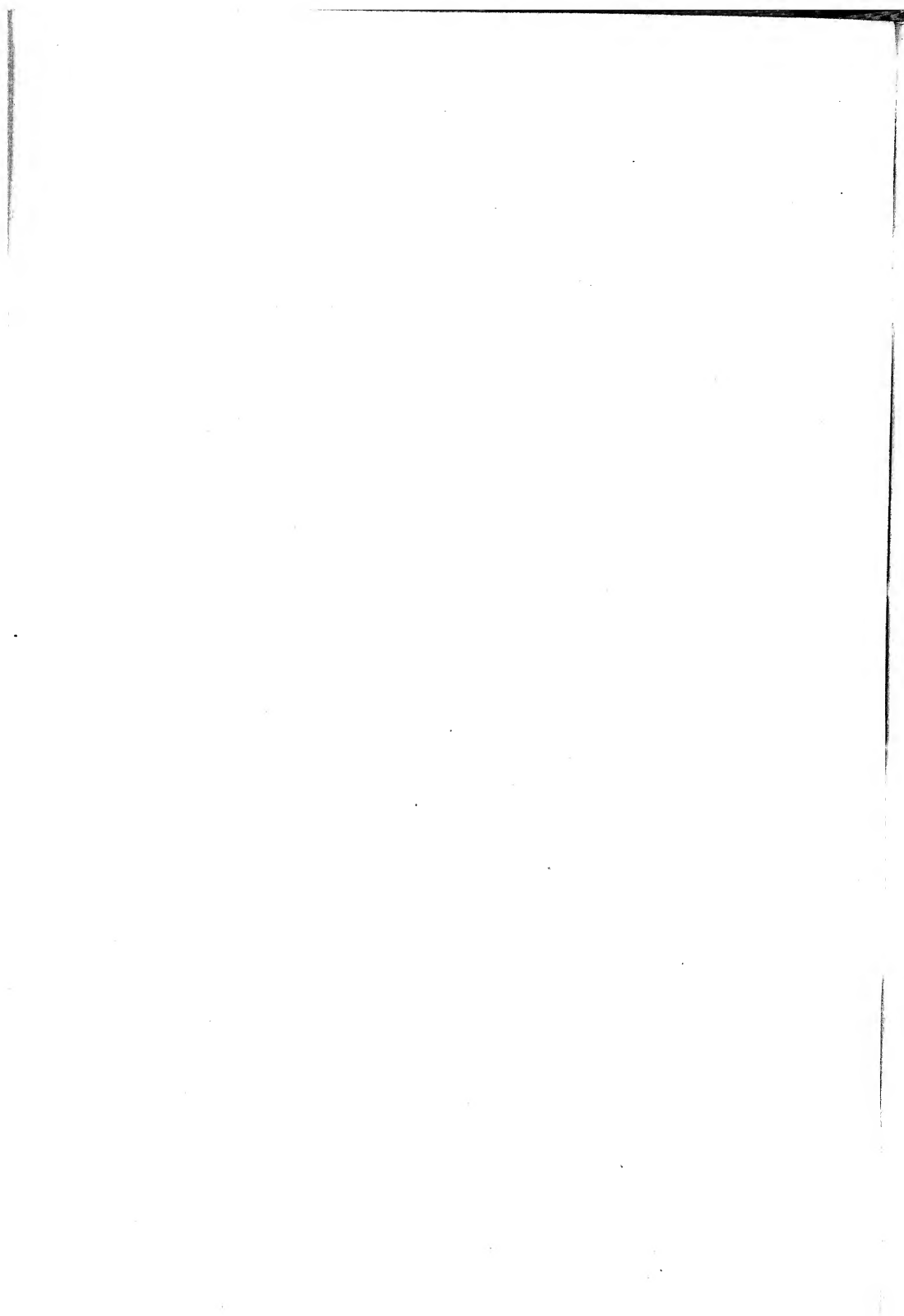
These two warm friends had been thrown intimately together at the Vatican Council. Bayley was then 56 years old, Gibbons 36, and during the long months of the council, when Americans were participating for the first time in a general synod of the Church, the elder prelate learned to admire both the talents and the graces of the younger. Bishop Gibbons, in turn, was captivated by the intellectual powers, the broad and deep cultivation, the strong nature of Bishop Bayley; and their friendship continued during the two years immediately following their return to America, until unexpected fate threw them in closer contact. Bayley's practical experience in life before his retirement into the semi-isolation of the Church had continued to be of the greatest use to him. He was a keen judge of the capabilities of others, and saw in his friend traits that would adorn the most exalted positions in the Church.

Virginia was not fruitful soil for an increase in the harvest of the Catholic faith. In that State more than any other lingered a trace of the atmosphere of Elizabethan England. On Jamestown Island, in May, 1607, Rev. Robert Hunt had spread a sail cloth between the boughs of trees and read the first service of the Church of England on American soil.* This remained the established church of Virginia, as much as of the mother country, until the Revolution. The local vestries were entrusted by law with political as well as ecclesiastical functions, such as the care of orphans and the poor. From public taxation the pay of the clergy was taken. Neither Catholics, nor persons of any other religious faith, were ever actively persecuted in Virginia, though the anti-Catholic, anti-

* Lyon G. Tyler, *Cradle of the Republic*, p. 116.



CARDINAL GIBBONS AS BISHOP OF RICHMOND



Puritan and anti-Quaker feeling among the people made it unpleasant at times to maintain open worship other than that of the English Church.

Even after the revolution marked impressions remained, especially in the tidewater counties, of the ecclesiastical and social predominance of the English Church in colonial times; it was too closely threaded in the life and institutions of the people to be withdrawn suddenly. Presbyterians and Lutherans entered the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, and other denominations, especially Baptists and Methodists, soon outnumbered the Episcopalians in the mountainous districts of the State.

In North Carolina there was scarcely any immigration to furnish a foothold for the Catholic Church. There was little more in Virginia, but still enough to plant a nucleus in each of the larger cities, like Richmond, Petersburg and Norfolk. The first mass in Richmond was said by Abbe Dubois, in 1791. Not until 1820 was the diocese created, and the outlook was so unpromising that it was abolished and united with Baltimore two years later. In 1840 it was re-established by Bishop Whelan, who administered it ten years, and was succeeded by Bishop McGill. Bishop Gibbons was, therefore, but the fourth in succession, counting from Bishop Kelly, who was in charge during the brief period 1820-22.

It is interesting to the student of American history to note that the Catholic faith and the Church of England were first planted on soil belonging to the English Crown, within the present limits of the United States, scarcely 100 miles from each other. Jamestown and St. Mary's are both within the segment of a circle of comparatively small radius whose center is at the mouth of the Chesapeake. In this strategic region, the key of America, Raleigh chose the base from which he would colonize the new empire; the Jamestown experiment succeeded, after Raleigh's head had fallen on the block; the Revolution was fired by the eloquence of Patrick Henry, and

was consummated at Yorktown; the War of 1812 was settled by the victories of North Point and Fort McHenry; the crisis of the Civil War occurred; and seven Presidents of the United States were born. Maryland and Virginia, so closely akin in many things, are totally unlike in church antecedents and influences. One has been receptive, by tradition and feeling, to the Catholic faith; the other has been the opposite. In parts of Virginia a Catholic priest is unknown even at this day, and would be looked on as a curiosity should he come.

As in North Carolina, Bishop Gibbons' field of labor in the Richmond diocese was among a people broken by war and "reconstruction." Had public opinion been less unfavorable to the Catholic Church, the other difficulties in the way of building up the diocese would still have been tremendous; to a man of less resolution, they would have been appalling. There was scarcely money enough in circulation to supply the elementary needs of business transactions, and almost none to build churches, convents and schools. For four years great contending armies had struggled up and down the State. What escaped the seizure of the Federals, was willingly given to the half-starved Confederates. In the process of destroying the economic resources of the State, so as to prevent it from being made a highway for future military advances on Washington, crops had been laid waste, fruit trees torn up by the roots, horses taken for the cavalry, cattle and hogs bayoneted in the fields, mills and dwellings burned.

All able-bodied men had joined the army, and the corpses of thousands strewn the soil as the shock of conflict passed from the Alleghanies to the Potomac. The sudden freeing of the slaves had demoralized the supply of agricultural labor. Farmers could get no seed to plant, no man to sow or reap. Piled on this base of wholesale destruction, had been the weight of crushing taxation imposed by the "carpet-baggers" and their negro allies, who were bent on extracting the last ounce of

blood from the helpless people suddenly cast under the evil spell of their power.

The diocese, which embraced nearly all of Virginia and several counties of West Virginia, contained at the time of Bishop Gibbons' arrival fifteen churches, the same number of chapels or stations, sixteen parochial schools and seventeen priests. A continuance of the aggressive methods employed in the vicariate resulted in winning many converts. The same liberality of view that had endeared Bishop Gibbons to the people of North Carolina, without regard to sect, appealed with equal strength to the predominantly Protestant population of Virginia. The Bishop's sermons in Richmond, Petersburg and throughout the State were attended by almost as many persons of other beliefs as Catholics, and were largely addressed to them. He could gauge his auditors. If they wanted an exposition of Catholic doctrine as a fortification to their own faith, few could give it as well as he; but, did they come to listen that they might disapprove, he won their attention at the outset by the presentation of the simple truths of Christianity, and then proceeded to a discussion of his theme with a breadth and charity of view that disarmed criticism. None could be offended; all were charmed. Protestants thanked him for visiting their towns, and Catholics looked upon him with pride.

Early in November, 1872, he went to Lynchburg, where he preached and confirmed, and then proceeded to Lexington. In that picturesque old town, where Robert E. Lee had died but two years before, the bishop confirmed ten persons in the engine-house, where Father Murray celebrated mass, no Catholic Church having then been erected there. He performed the ceremony of marriage for John B. Purcell and Miss Olympia Williamson, in the presence of a brilliant assemblage, including Gen. G. W. Custis Lee, son of the Confederate chieftain, and prominent persons from Washington and Lee University and the Virginia Military Institute, where "Stonewall" Jackson had taught.

Returning to Richmond, he contracted for the erection of a schoolhouse at the corner of Ninth and Marshall streets, at a cost of \$17,695.

Early in 1873 he made a trip to North Carolina, preaching, lecturing, confirming and generally stimulating the work of the vicariate. At Raleigh he confirmed a class of nine, including the mayor and his wife, who were converts. Returning to his duties in Virginia, he visited Alexandria, Fairfax, Gordonsville, Warrenton, Middleburg, Winchester and other places in Northern Virginia, where almost every foot of ground had been trodden by armies but a few years before and where memories of Washington, Madison, Monroe, Marshall and other pillars of the republic abounded. In a short time he had inspected the work in practically every church in the diocese, and accessions to the faith in large numbers began.

At Culpeper, he preached in the town hall to a large congregation, most of whom were Protestants. The local judge adjourned court in order to enable those attending it to be present at the sermon.

While on a trip to North Carolina in 1874 the bishop preached in the Court-House at Halifax, where he was the guest of Mr. Conigland. About 4.30 o'clock the next morning, his sleep was disturbed by the barking of dogs. This enabled him to hear a noise in his room, which, he soon found, was made by a thief searching for plunder. Calling out "who's there?" he received no answer. He then leaped from bed to attack the robber, but the latter fled, leaving at the door the bishop's vest, containing about \$150. His cross was lying on the table and his watch was under the pillow, but, after a hasty examination, he found that nothing was missing. "It was fortunate," he said, in relating the incident, "that I did not seize the man, as he probably would have overpowered me."

Wm. S. Caldwell, a wealthy resident of Richmond, deeded to the bishop a handsome residence, with its furniture, which

was converted into a home for the Little Sisters of the Poor.* Both Houses of the Legislature, under a suspension of rules, passed unanimously a bill incorporating the order in Virginia, and it was promptly signed by the Governor. In a short time a community of six, headed by Sister Virginia—appropriately called—was installed. Two years later a community of the Sisters of Charity was established at Petersburg.

Bishop Gibbons was constantly called upon to answer objections which sprang from the fact that the Protestant faiths were the only ones known in many of the localities he visited. When he returned after a time, he found the impressions produced by his sermons weakened, and the idea of supplementing them by a printed treatise occurred to him. He suggested this one day while visiting Father Gross, in Wilmington, in the spring of 1876, and asked him to write it. Father Gross said:

"Bishop, why don't you write it?"

Seized with an inspiration, the Bishop replied:

"While the spirit is in me, give me paper and ink, and I will jot down the first chapter."

Such was the beginning of "The Faith of Our Fathers," of which nearly a million copies have been sold. The labor of composing this book, one of the most remarkable religious works which has appeared in any age or language, was crowded into the indefatigable young Bishop's duties. He meditated on each successive chapter while traveling on railway cars, or by other means, and confirmed his quotations and references on his return. In clear, simple and classic English he thus wrote the principles of the Catholic religion and replied in detail to the arguments commonly urged against it. No religious controversial book had ever been conceived in a broader spirit. It leaves no sting with the reader, be his convictions what they may, and as a concise explanation of the Church, its history, doctrines and mission, it has never had an equal. One may lay it down and say "I disagree," but never

* 1874.

"I do not understand." Its literary strength and grace gave it a permanent place in the libraries of the world almost immediately after its publication, late in 1876; priests found that it said what they wanted to say better than they could say it themselves, and its circulation by the thousands has ever since been a favorite means of reinforcing the efforts of the clergy. It has been translated into twelve languages.

The book takes up the leading doctrines of the Catholic Church, such as the trinity, the incarnation, unity of the Church, apostolicity, perpetuity, authority, the primacy of Peter, the supremacy of the popes, the temporal power, invocation of saints, the Blessed Virgin Mary, sacred images, purgatory, prayers for the dead, charges of religious persecution, the holy eucharist, the sacrifice of the mass, the use of religious ceremonies and the Latin language, penance, indulgences, and extreme unction. Regarding each of these, a clear and simple explanation is given. Objections are frankly and fully cited and answered in detail.

These doctrines, the author points out, are misunderstood by many Protestants; and where it serves the purpose of his exposition he employs dialogue. The following extract is in the form of a conversation between a Protestant minister and a convert to the Catholic Church, which he cites as an illustration:

Minister—"You can not deny that the Roman Catholic Church teaches gross errors—the worship of images, for instance."

Convert—"I admit no such charges, for I have been taught no such doctrines."

Minister—"But the priest who instructed you did not teach you all. He held back some points which he knew would be objectionable to you."

Convert—"He withheld nothing; for I am in possession of books treating thoroughly of all Catholic doctrines."

Minister—"Deluded soul! Do you not know that in Europe they are taught differently?"

Convert—"That can not be; for the Church teaches the same creed all over the world, and most of the doctrinal books which I read were originally published in Europe."

SOUGHT TO CORRECT MISUNDERSTANDING. 71

The author particularly urged that the Church should be judged by her own acts and declarations, and not by those of her enemies. Writing in the South, he asked if it would be fair, in order to obtain a correct estimate of the Southern people, to select for his only sources of information Northern periodicals which during the Civil War were bitterly opposed to the South. He defended with particular warmth the assertion that the Catholic Church had always been the zealous promoter of religious and civil liberty. Wherever encroachments on these rights of man were perpetrated by individual members of the faith, he argued, the wrongs, far from being sanctioned by the Church, were committed in palpable violation of her authority. He took up the old arguments about the Spanish Inquisition and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and discussed them fully from the Catholic point of view. The broad charity which shines through the pages of the book has been, perhaps, as potent as its logic in carrying conviction to the minds of tens of thousands of readers throughout the world.

In the five years during which Bishop Gibbons presided over the Richmond Diocese the number of churches increased from fifteen to twenty-four, with about the same number of chapels or stations, to which twenty-four priests ministered. The subject of education was always close to his heart, and under his vigorous efforts ten new parochial schools were established. There was a marked development in all directions, and the diocese was kept practically free from debt.*

He frequently visited Baltimore to assist Archbishop Bayley at ecclesiastical ceremonies, and, in fact, was identified almost as much with Baltimore as Richmond, the proximity of his diocese and his natural ties with the archiepiscopal see leading almost inevitably to this. The most notable of these occasions was the consecration May 25, 1876, of the Baltimore Cathedral,† whose corner-stone had been laid in 1806 by Bishop

* *Catholic Standard*, Philadelphia, October 27, 1877. Quoted by Rely, Vol. II, p. 113.

† *Catholic Mirror*, May 27, 1876.

Carroll, but which was not free of debt until seventy years later. Archbishop Bayley was the consecrator and Bishop Gibbons preached.

What thoughts welled up within him as he stood in the pulpit on that memorable occasion! The superb old pile had been a part of his life, and his life had been a part of it. Within two hundred feet of it had been old St. Peter's Church, the first of the Catholic religion in Baltimore, erected about 1770 on the north side of what is now Saratoga street, near Charles street, on land bought in 1764 from Charles Carroll, father of Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Archbishop Carroll had pontificated there, but he cherished the dream of a Cathedral and raised \$225,000—a great sum in those days—by collections, subscriptions, and even by a lottery, which accorded with the custom of the times. Benjamin H. Latrobe, the architect of the Capitol in Washington, drew the plans. The Cathedral is a cruciform structure, Ionic in its general outlines, but now capped by Russo-Byzantine towers, which predominate the architectural tone. The great blocks of granite for its construction were hauled from Ellicott City, ten miles distant, by oxen. John Eager Howard, the hero of Cowpens, gave much of the large lot on which it stands. The War of 1812 stopped the work, and, while still unfinished, it was dedicated May 31, 1821, by Archbishop Marechal. Seven years later, Mgr. Marechal gave it a large bell, bought in his native France, and completed one of the towers. The altar was the gift of Marseilles priests, whose teacher he had been. Archbishop Eccleston finished the second tower, and Archbishops Kenrick and Spalding erected the noble portico, adorned with huge pillars. The bodies of Carroll and other archbishops find sepulture in this venerable church. Within its walls was held the Provincial Council of 1829, the first in any English-speaking country since the Reformation. Among the historic church edifices of

'America the Baltimore Cathedral is easily first in importance, though not in antiquity.*

The consecration of the Cathedral was marked by a notable assemblage of prelates, clergy and laity. Bishop Gibbons, in his sermon, dwelt on the permanency of the Church, and then struck a note which was characteristic of him.

"It is charged," he said, "that the Church will shrink from the light of modern invention and discovery. Ah, no! She will welcome them and will use them to extend the knowledge of God. Yes, we bless you, men of genius! If, when railroads and steam vessels and telegraphs were not known, the Church carried the gospel to distant nations and unexplored regions, how much more can she do with their aid?

"Need it be repeated that the Church is slandered when it is charged that she is inimical to liberty! The Church flourishes only in the beams of liberty. She has received more harm from the tyranny and oppression of kings and rulers than any other of the victims of their power. We pray for the prosperity of this our young country. In this its centennial year we rejoice that it has lived to so sturdy a life of liberty and regard for right, and we raise the prayer '*Esto Perpetua*.'"

Only a little more than a year was to elapse before he would be preaching in this same Cathedral as Archbishop of the Province of Baltimore.

During his residence in Richmond, Bishop Gibbons was not able to obtain the appointment of a vicar for North Carolina. The faithful Father Gross wrote in February, 1876:

"When, on the death of the bishop of Richmond, Bishop Gibbons was *nolens volens*, introduced by His Holiness Pius IX into the see of Richmond, with the title of administrator apostolic over the vicariate of North Carolina, it was but the change of an additional new field, bringing an increase of the same arduous duties. The change was, and still is, keenly felt by the people and especially by the clergy of North Carolina. But the vicariate is not forgotten, nor is it neglected. Frequent

* Riordan, Cathedral Records, pp. 93-98.

visits are made in the State, when the bishop lectures upon Catholic truths and cheers the hearts of all, laity and clergy, by his presence. The citizens of Wilmington, Raleigh, Charlotte, Salisbury and Fayetteville frequently enjoy his strong and engaging discourses in explanation of Catholic doctrine. He has multiplied his help by the admission of priests for the missions in the work of the ministry. Every town in North Carolina of importance has its priests, its regular Sunday service. No hour of the day or night is there when Catholics may not receive the ministrations of their religion. If there is any regret, it comes from the Catholics themselves.

"But, thank God, if the field of North Carolina has been well worked, the fruit has been abundant. No Catholics are more fervent; no people are more easily won over to the faith. Of three missions, two of them can boast of a hundred converts each; the other of thirty. Male and female Catholic schools have been established. In a word, Rev. Dr. Gibbons found in North Carolina in 1868 three priests (one borrowed, since returned), now there are seven or eight; he found seven hundred Catholics, now there are sixteen hundred; seven churches, now there are eleven or twelve, with a convent-academy, conducted by the Sisters of Mercy, and located upon a handsome piece of property purchased for them by the bishop. The word is still 'onward' in North Carolina.

"An impression prevails that the Catholics could not support their vicar and bishop, hence his removal. They could not honor him, indeed, with those episcopal surroundings becoming, but not necessary to, his sublime office of bishop. Such wealth of catholicity North Carolina does not possess. The pope's vicar did not come to find and enjoy the becoming honors and dignity of an established diocese, but to accept and perform the duty of a bishop—to preach the gospel, to convert souls; to accept the poverty of a vicariate, and by his apostolic labor, to make it rich with the wealth of Catholic faith. The field of North Carolina, with its poverty and trials, and sparse Catholicity, was, and is yet, not too much for our vicar, nor for any one whom the Holy Father may judge to send. Everything has a beginning. Even the gospel of Christ has its seed. Others may enter into our labor and may enjoy its fruits. The more numerous and imperative wants of the Richmond diocese, widowed by the death of Rev. Dr. McGill, removed our vicar. Rather the spiritual poverty of the Richmond diocese caused the transfer than any failure in North Carolina.

"Our vicar was removed with the promise of another; but our bishop's zeal is so untiring, his charity so unselfish, that though we constantly regret, we feel the less his transfer. Catholicity is still advancing in

North Carolina, and rapidly, though our vicar's undivided efforts would, of course, produce still greater results."*

When Archbishop McCloskey was elevated to the Sacred College in 1875, the young bishop's thoughts were far from associating his own career with that honor. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that he viewed it in much the same light as his own appointment afterward impressed him—an honor to his country, and to its non-Catholic as well as Catholic people. He thus expressed himself:

"The hierarchy of the United States will rejoice to hear that this eminent dignity has been conferred on an American prelate, who has endeared himself to the church by his long service in the cause of religion, his marked ability, his unostentatious piety and great suavity of manners. I am persuaded also that not only the Catholic body of this country, but our citizens at large, will receive, with just pride, the intelligence that the Holy Father has determined to associate an American Archbishop with the members of the Sacred College. There is no doubt that the venerable Archbishop of New York will fill with marked discretion and wisdom that exalted and responsible position."†

The Bishop's farewell sermon to the people of his diocese in St. Peter's Cathedral, October 14, 1877, was marked by characteristic modesty. Though he had done so much for them, he gave the human credit to his predecessor, Bishop McGill.

"Ever since I took charge of this portion of the Lord's vineyard," he said, "God has singularly blessed us. To Him be all the honor and glory. Every other cause of success is secondary to Him. Paul soweth, Apollo watereth, but God giveth the increase. Without Him, we would have made no progress. We would have fished all night, like Peter, and caught nothing. Next to God, you are indebted to my venerable and illustrious predecessor, who left the diocese in a solvent and healthy condition. He was a man of eminent prudence and discretion, and of caution verging on timidity. He might have gained

* Letter to the *Southern Cross*, February 9, 1876. Quoted by Reilly, Vol. II, p. 106 *et seq.*

† New York *Herald*, March 14, 1875.

for himself a great name for enterprise and material progress by erecting churches and other institutions throughout the diocese, without regard to expense. But with all that, he might have bequeathed to his successor a load of debt which would have paralyzed his usefulness and crushed his heart. He left me few debts to pay and few scandals to heal. He left a diocese without incumbrance and a character without reproach. It was fortunate for this diocese that Bishop McGill presided over its destinies for upwards of twenty years, for he stamped his character upon the older clergy, who had the happiness of observing his edifying life and of being associated with him in the ministry.

"It is very gratifying to me, though this is the first occasion I have done so, to speak in terms of praise of the clergy of this diocese; other priests, indeed, I have met who have a greater reputation for learning and the graces of oratory, but, taken as a body, I have never met any priests to surpass those of this diocese in attachment to duty, in singleness of purpose, in personal virtue and obedience to the voice of authority. And if I be permitted to single out some of the clergy from among their colleagues, surely I can point with peculiar joy to the Cathedral clergy, who have lived with me as members of the same household, and who have always deported themselves in a manner becoming their sacred calling.
* * * If I could lift the veil and reveal to you their domestic life, I could disclose to you a spirit of order, peace and brotherly concord which I hope to see imitated, but dare not hope to see surpassed.

"As for you, brethren of the laity, you can bear me witness that I never indulged you by vain flattery, but that I have always endeavored to propose to you your duty, no matter how distasteful it might have been to flesh and blood. But on the present occasion I would be doing violence to my own feelings if I did not express my deep sense of admiration for the piety of many of you, which edified me; for the obedience of all of



OLD ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL AND BISHOP'S RESIDENCE, RICHMOND, VA., IN 1876.